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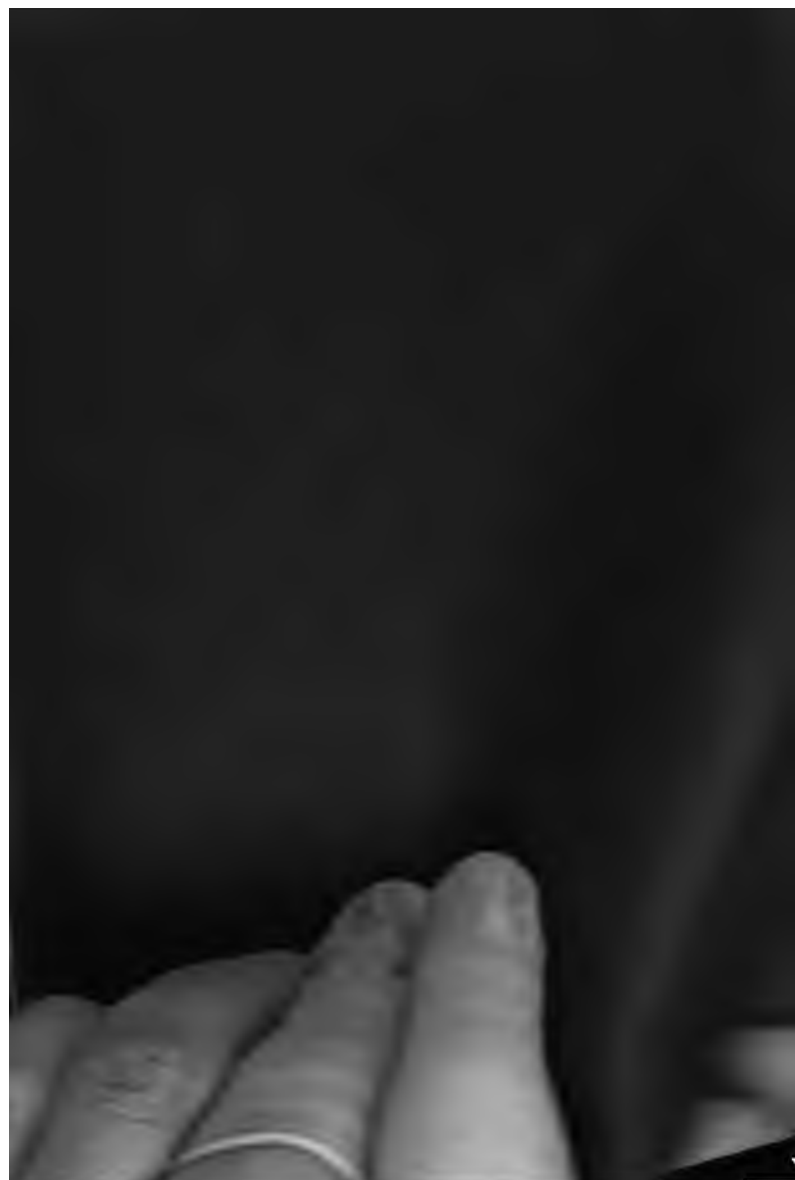
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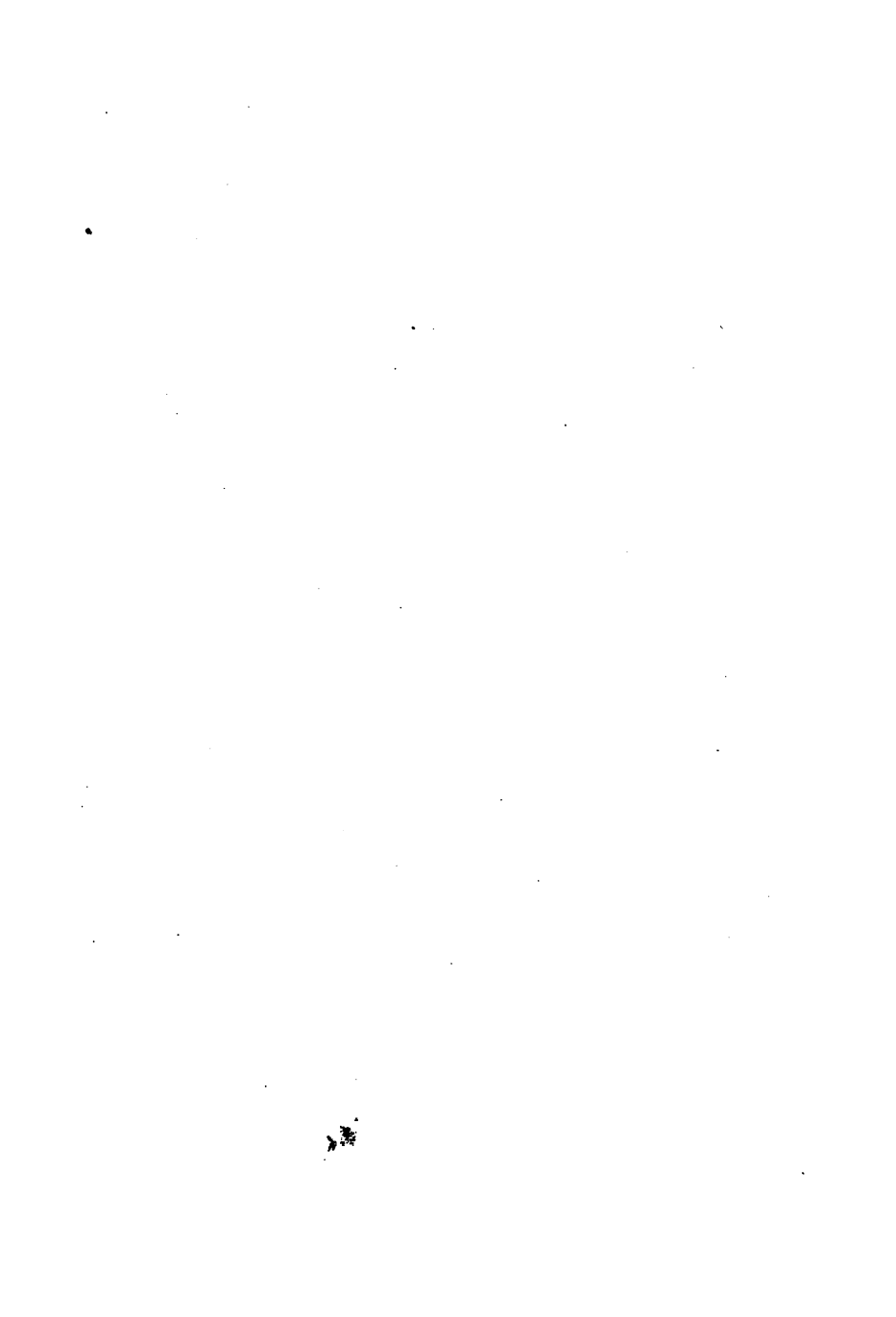


IPHIGENE





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BY
ALEXANDER LAUDER.



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IPHIGENE.

-7

HOW lovely are the feet of Spring!
Glad tidings on her poiséd wing,
Her footprints on the melting snow;
Hermon and Lebanon proclaim,
Amid the avalanche acclaim,
Her advent to the hills below.
The forest pine, and cedar, greet
Companions dormant at their feet;
Shaking their garments from the hoar,
As sentinels whose watch is o'er.

B

With joy the sylvan sleepers wake,
In vineyard, orchard, wood, and brake ;
On every bough, the zephyr's kiss
Awakes the leaflet chrysalis ;
The aurelian buds on every tree,
From golden tombs burst audibly.

Zephyrs, their sylvan psalteries string,
To odes Eolian all day long ;
Their voices languish as they sing
To queenly moon their choicest song ;
When all the courtier stars are met,
And all the flowrets' eyes are wet,
And vestal lilies of the vale
Are love-lorn, with the minstrel gale ;
Their jewelled chalices of snow
With fragrant sweetness overflow.

The snow-born torrents bounding free,
Loud-laugh with wild hilarity ;
Until the wearied waters glide,
Where lotus-lilies anchored ride,

Unlading sweets on wave and breeze,
Like perfume-laden argosies :
Or ripple out in countless rills,
Mid hyacinths and daffodils,
Where the returning halcyon feeds,
Among the flowers and waving reeds ;
And hermit herons poise their wing,
At the sweet waters murmuring.

Again the turtle woos his dove,
Where the sweet myrtle scents the air ;
The song birds, eloquent with love,
To every fragrant grove repair ;
They woo each earlier morn with song,
And every radiant eve prolong.

O lovely Spring ! when hills are altars,
Whose floral incense fills the air ;
When woods and groves are sylvan psalters,
Full of hymnal praise and prayer.
Sweet messenger ! oh, stay thy wing,
'Tis heaven on earth thy sojourning.

Why floats not now, o'er Sharon's mead,
The dulcet voice of shepherd's reed ?
Why stands untenanted the fold,
Whence teeming flocks were led of old ?
The playful lambs, the shepherd's call,
Where is the lovely pastoral ?
Why are the olive orchards waste,
 To flow no more with sacred oil ?
Vineyards to desolation haste,
 Once fruitful with the dresser's toil ?

Hush ! rising on the vernal gale,
 The Gentile victor's loud huzza
Declares God's curse on Israel,
 Mount Ebal's dread anathema.
The fowls of heaven, the beasts of prey,
 Hold noisy banquet o'er the slain ;
Where Hebrew shields were cast away,
 And Hebrew valour fought in vain.
The cities are laid desolate,
 Famine their lonely habitant ;
The pestilence besets the gate,
 " In quarrel of God's covenant."

The mighty men! oh, where are they?
Their bones lie blanching in the way,
And terror haunts the residue,
Flying in haste, where none pursue.
Fathers for captive children wail;
Their eyes with watchful longing fail.
When anger burns, with misery fann'd,
Behold, no might is in their hand.
As morning gilds the mountain side,
 "Would God 'twere even" is their cry;
When the slow hours bring eventide,
 "Would God 'twere morning," they reply.

Lo! round Shiloh's courts assembling,
Priests and people meet with trembling;
Their pagan foes, hold in derision,
The hapless nation's late contrition.
Oh sunny memories of the past!
The sacred festival and fast,
When Jah Jehovah through the vail,
Shone graciously on Israel.

Shepherds of Simeon loved to bring
From teeming flocks their offering;

From Ephraim, Gilead and Dan,
There came the hardy husbandman,
With grateful firstfruits of his toil,
Of almonds, figs, and wine and oil.
From Kishon's richly watered plain,
The men of Issachar brought grain ;
And fishermen from Galilee,
Bore the finn'd offspring of the sea.
From Beersheba to northern Dan,
There came the joyous caravan,
The tinkling bells of the camels' train,
Ringing on every hill and plain :
And when they reared their tents, around
The Tent of God, the hallowed ground,
Oh ! every sacred echo then,
Rung with the songs of grateful men.
Oh lovely vision of the night !
Each company's enkindled light
Throughout the vast encampment shone ;
God's host—then terrible in fight—
Attendant on the Holy One.

Now, midnight gales, in mournful tone,
Around the sanctuary moan,
As weary spirits of the slain
Sought rest within its courts again.
The people come, but cannot bring
Their long-accustomed offering ;
The flocks on Sharon's verdure bred,
Are now by Gentile shepherds led ;
And Bashan's beeves o'er Kedar stray,
By swift Arabian driv'n away.
The pastures of Elealeh pine
For bleating sheep and lowing kine ;
The fields of Heshbon wasted lie,
Where winds through earless stubble sigh ;
On their swift dromedaries borne,
Midian invaders seized the corn.

To Gilead's ruinous Bazaar

No Teman merchants laden come ;
Bringing sweet spices from afar,
Cinnamon, gold, and galbanum,

With stacté, cane, and frankincense ;
Bartering for Egypt's mart, from thence,
Sweet almonds, nuts, and oil and balm,
Wild-honey, and the wine of palm.
Ah ! grateful Gilead whilom brought

These precious spices of the East,
With secret efficacy fraught

When blent in the unguent of the priest ;
Or mingled in the incense, meet
To burn before the Mercy-Seat.
Benjamin brings no fragrant wine,
Juice of pomegranate, date, or vine ;
No pure oil olive for the light,
Kept ever burning, day and night.
Yet Israel comes, with humble shrift,
Without oblation, tribute, gift,
His only plea, at mercy's door,
God's passover—the feast of yore.

The people gaze upon the shrine,
Sacred with memories divine ;

The summer swallow still resorts
To the sweet sanctuary's courts ;
And unmolested builds her nest,
Where weary Israel cannot rest.

Alas ! the greatest grief is come,
Shekinah's Voice Divine is dumb ;
The Paschal sacrifice is slain,
The sprinkled blood is shed in vain ;
The altar fires but idly glow,
Vainly the blood and water flow.

The people wait, with growing dread,
As Night her bright pavilion spread ;
Mazzaroth shines, the curtain light

 Veiling the chambers of the sun ;
Orion in the orient bright,

 And swift Arcturus onward run ;
And all the stars whose light intense,
Owns the sweet Pleiads' influence
Roll on, immutably the same,
When on their chariot wheels of flame

Jehovah came to Israel's aid ;
Why is His chariot now delayed ?
The Priest appears within the veil,
Alas ! in vain for Israel :
The incense burns with fragrance sweet,
No cloud rests on the Mercy Seat,—
Empty the Throne of Israel's King,
The blood doth no atonement bring.
Urim and Thummim cease to shine ;
Obscured the lustral Light Divine :
Shekinah is not there to bless,
The Oracle is tenantless.
Had God, in anger on the nation,
Smitten the priest in mediation ?
No golden tinkling of the bells,
Around his ephod, answering tells.
Oh ! who shall stand before His ire,
Whose anger is consuming fire ?
Oh ! who shall dare uplift the veil,
Where pleading prayer has no avail ?
Was their brave intercessor dead ?
The host are crushed, with awful dread ;

And fast the creeping horror grows,
A weird and wistful whispering rose,
As the priest between the curtains came,
And pointing to the altar's flame,
He cried—each word a piercing sword—
“Behold! the prophet of the Lord.”

The altar's lambent flames descry
The waiting seer to every eye ;
An aged, honoured, holy seer,
Whose eye ran with the frequent tear,
Welling from a love profound,
To the poor wanderers around.
Coarse was his raiment, worn and bare,
His luxuries, the humblest fare,
The pittance, which the godly gave,
With nectar from some fountain's wave,
His only home some tomb or cave ;
His mother earth's cold breast his bed,
His Father, vigilant o'erhead.
From tribe to tribe he sought to bless,
And comfort all in their distress,

Preaching the God of Israel,
Burning the images of Baal ;
Beloved or feared by every man,
From far Beersheba unto Dan.

The air its breath held in suspension,
As though the heavens gave attention,
When the prophet of Jehovah rose,
His mighty mission to disclose.

“Hear me, ye votaries of Baal,
“The words of God to Israel.
“‘The turtle may forget her nest,
“‘To brood with fond incubant breast,
“‘Nestling with patient loving peace,
“‘The serpent eggs of the cockatrice,
“‘Until the viper breaks the shell,
“‘And stings the heart that nursed too well ;
“‘Flapping its wings, the wondering dove
“‘Falls martyr to maternal love.
“‘Shall I,’ saith Jeshurun’s God in wrath,
“‘Cover the brood of Ashtaroth ?

“ ‘When, like the ostrich in distress,
“ ‘She leaves them in the wilderness?’
“ ‘Slaves of the sin ye love so well,
“ ‘Attend unto my parable.

“ ‘An eagle, tow’ring in his might,
 “ ‘Ranging at will through aërial plains
“ ‘Beyond the mountain’s utmost height,
 “ ‘Above the raging wind’s domains ;
“ ‘The breadth of heaven its sure defence,
“ ‘Surrounded with Omnipotence.
“ ‘Alas ! presumption plucked the wing,
“ ‘The plume that knew no wearying ;
“ ‘Soaring to chase the flight of day,
“ ‘The darkness brought the bird at bay,
“ ‘Lost, in a wilderness of night,
“ ‘The whirlwind came in vengeful flight,
“ ‘No ray above, no sound below,
“ ‘Nought that the eye or ear could know ;
“ ‘The whirling blast o’ertook its prey,
“ ‘Hurling it helplessly away,
“ ‘With screams of unavailing woe,
“ ‘On Hermon’s icy peaks below.

" So Israel from his place is hurl'd
" From o'er the kingdoms of the world.

" Shades of our mighty fathers, spring !
" Declare the power of Israel's King.
" Graves of the sterile desert, shake !
" Let all the dead in Sheol awake !
" Miriam ! arise from Kadesh plain,
" Sing ye the pean Divine again.
" Rise, Moses ! grand prophetic shade !
" Rise from the tomb the angels made.
" Awake ! O holy Thesmothete,
" These weary, wandering people meet ;
" Declare His power, who closed thine eyes,
" Prophet and mediator, rise !
" Tell how the dread sirocco rose,
" Hurling destruction on our foes ;
" His winds rode on the foaming sea,
" Crushing Egyptian chivalry.
" God's chariot of fire was driven,
" Thundering in the midst of heaven,

“ When Israel's King went forth alone,
“ And Israel's foes were overthrown.
“ The roar of billows drowned their cries,
“ And darkness hid their agonies.
“ Shade of the prophet! rise and sing
“ The glory of Jeshurun's King.

“ Oh come! for this is hallowed ground!
“ Shades of the past! oh gather round;
“ Here! where in years that are fled ye came,
“ Where the Almighty rears His name.

“ Hail Joshua! at whose command
“ The sun and moon obedient stand;
“ When Baal himself all radiant shone,
“ While Israel fought in Ajalon;
“ When the Great King led on the fight
“ And Israel crushed the Amorite.
“ Ye warrior shades! triumphant cry,
“ Prolong the shout of victory!
“ Lo! lion Judah treads the vine,
“ To cheer the heart of the Philistine;

"No more he ravens on the slain,

"The mountain monarch is inane.

"O river Kishon! child of snow!

"Thy waves with melting murmurs flow;

"Sing ye the memories of the dead,

"While rolling o'er thine ancient bed;

"Sing of brave Barak as you run,

"Of Naphthali and Zebulun,

"When, like swift eagles from the skies,

"They swoop upon their enemies.

"Echoes of Tabor! never more

"Shall your exultant voices roar

"The sounds of battle as they soar;

"When Jabin's host was overthrown,

"As grass before the scythe is mown.

"His pride and pageantry undone,

"As dews before the melting sun.

"His chariots still bestrew the plain;

"There let them rust in sun and rain.

"Breathe on your lutes, ye northern gales,
"That haunt Esdraelon's fruitful vales ;
"Breathe your Eolian chords again,
"And sing Jehovah's mighty name.
"Lo ! from the desert came a blast :
"Ishmael was numbered with the past."

The prophet paused : no sound was heard,
But the whirr of the wings of a passing bird ;
The winds and the people holding their breath,
So awfully still, like the silence of death.
The prophet fell by the altar's side,
Emotion mastering the man,
Tears in their wrinkled courses ran,
As, lifting his clasped hands, he cried :

"O Israel ! Israel ! God forsaken !
"By awful wrath Divine o'ertaken ;
"The gates of light are closed to thee,
"Poor wandering child of misery ;
"The stars in yonder hemispheres,
"Gleam like angel eyes in tears :

"Archangels, weeping at the gate,
"Beholding thee disconsolate.
"Israel! the filthy and abhorr'd,
"Hear ye the message of the Lord :
"'Thy name is no longer Israel,
"'Thy name is changed unto Baal ;
"'Where is thy betrothal troth,
"'Adulterer with Ashtaroth?
"'Why seek ye me? Go to the groves,
"'Whose secret shades reveal your loves.
"'Go! child of wantonness and shame,
"'Thou art not called by My Name.'"

As when the shepherd's tuneful horn
Is o'er some mountain silence borne ;
Its single tones wake as they flee,
A grand anthemnal symphony.
The mighty silence breaks at once
While choral echoes make response,
So fell on the listening multitude,
The words with holy fire imbued.

Like sudden winds upon the ocean,
Great is the tempest of emotion ;
The breaking waves of sorrow roll
Convulsed and surging o'er the whole ;
Some rocking their bodies to and fro,
In the delirium of woe ;
Their arms in desolation swinging,
Some psalm, but half remembered, singing ;
Some, with their heads between their knees,
Sob, with convulsive agonies ;
Some tear their beards, and rend their hair,
In the wild agony of despair.

Out from the host a Levite came,
With tottering step and crouching frame,
Unbound the fastening of his vest,
And lo ! upon his naked breast

His bosom God was manifest.
He scann'd the teraph's simpering air,
His lips moved with habitual prayer ;
Casting one haggard look around,
He flung the idol on the ground,
And prostrate fell in blank despair.

Then cried the prophet, "All draw nigh,
"Who truly seek the Lord most High.
"Bring ye the gods in whom ye trust,
"Assay them in their kindred fire;
"God's winds shall scatter far their dust,
"And, peradventure, God His ire."

The host in frenzied tumult rose,
Their bosom teraphim disclose;
Through loss of all, preserved the last,
Now in a pile are worthless cast.
The prophet seized, with angry hand,
From the altar's fire a burning brand;
A pillar of smoke arose on high,
Expanding to the vaulted sky:
And soon the voice of devouring fire
Roared, as imbued with righteous ire.

Crackling and hissing, the gods expire;
The molten teraphs seething fell,
Grinning like demons in their hell.

Oh, solemn sight, that burning mound!
A mighty people gathered round,

With misery and famine spent,
Watching the mysterious element,
Swiftly ravening on its prey.
The heap melts rapidly away,
As angry flames, like tongues of fire,
Play o'er it, loathing to retire :
All but the virgin ore consumed,
And every idol fire-inhuned.

Then spake the holy seer again,
" Let there a sacrifice be slain,
" And, peradventure, God will hear
" Prayers of a people now sincere."
Swiftly the girded priests obey,
Swiftly the lamb is brought to slay.
Its pleading bleat, its helpless moan,
As innocent blood flows to atone,
Rose harrowing on the midnight air,
Amid the wailings of despair ;
The undying fire on the altar shone
With a lurid glare on every one.

But hush! from Moab comes a sound
As if perdition were unbound;
The air grows tremulous and warm,
As on the lightning speeds the storm;
Heaven lowers, a sultry sepulchre,
Where sulphurous clouds the stars inter.
From the deep darkness darts a flash,
All dagger-like—a thrust—a gash—
Deep in the bosom of the air.
The winds rush wildly from their lair,
And round the sanctuary wail and moan,
As flash on flash prolongs the awful groan.

Ruefully rose the human wail,
Amid the fury of the gale;
The terror-stricken shriek anon,
As every flash all blinding shone,
And shed its lurid, ghastly glare
On mortal anguish and despair.
Terrible scene! all drear and dread,
The heavens girt as with fire o'erhead,
Blackness shrouding all below
In deep and desolatory woe.

Grand over all, the holy seer,
Serene, uninfluenced with fear,
By the burning altar kneeling,
The loud-voiced thunder o'er him pealing,
The people wailing their confession,
His voice alone in intercession.

- "How long, Lord, shall Thy righteous ire
"Destroy, as a consuming fire?
"As grass—the withered summer grass—
"We perish as Thy judgments pass.
"As the mirage fleeth, so our day
"Illusorily hastes away:
"A shadow flitting on the dial,
"A dim and transitory shade,
"Leaving no impress all the while.
"Withdraw Thy light, and lo we fade!
"Remember, Lord, our frailty;
"Forget—forgive—our sin, our shame;
"To whom, Lord, can we come but Thee?
"Remember Thy revealed name!"

In majesty the storm swept by ;
And light, like hope, thrills through the sky :
And timid, like a virgin fawn,
The trembling footsteps of the dawn
Glide lightly o'er the star-flower'd lawn ;
Now darting on in swifter flight
Before the arrows of the light.
The sun arose, with fiery gleam,
Awaking as from troubled dream ;
His rays, with cloud-dispersing sweep,
Glance piercing through the ether deep,
Whose azure waves still toss in play
A wreck of clouds in silvery spray.
All spectre-like, the moon grows wan,
And wanes before his searching scan :
And pallid lightnings flicker yet
In regions where the sun doth set :
And sullen thunders rumbling rolled,
Far distant in the western wold.

Oh lovely morn ! fit emblem thou
Of light divine, irradiate now !

The prophet's voice again is heard,
All cheerful as the soaring bird
That cleaves the clear and ambient air,
Late loudly vocal with despair.

“ Brethren, my three score years and ten
“ Of mortal sojourn among men
“ Are past. The tent now waxeth old ;
“ My spirit yearneth for its fold ;
“ The weary heart in this old breast
“ Pants as a storm-tossed wave for rest ;
“ Its pulse is almost worn away,
“ It springs to youth again to-day.
“ Ye fading stars in yonder skies !
“ Tell the glad news in Paradise :
“ Thou waning moon ! in yonder west,
“ Proclaim it on each mountain crest :
“ All hail ! thou brilliant morning beam,
“ Be heavenly witness of the scene :
“ Behold your wayward devotees,
“ Outworn with sorrow and disease,
“ Returning to Jeshurun's God,
“ The ways in which their fathers trod .

" Ye votaries of yon orb of light,
" Behold him in his onward flight ;
" His wayward path will suit me well
" To point my simple parable.

" Behold the autumnal renegade,
" Whom Israel's God in light arrayed,
" Returning, in his vernal flight,
" From prison of chill chrysolite :
" The fetters of the Winter King,
" Still, round the solar monarch cling.

" When from eternal chaos rose
" The universe in grand repose,
" In threads of light, the Almighty spun
" The raiment of the naked sun,
" And bade the circling earth obey
" The radiant ruler of the day.
" The power of darkness strove in vain
" To overcome his genial reign.
" Eden's fair river onward ran,
" Watering the primal home of man,

“ And flashing, gleaming, joyously
“ Murmured its hymnal melody.
“ Alas! when Satan’s fell device
“ Deceived the lord of Paradise,
“ The deed so hateful, so perverse,
“ Shook the tottering universe.

“ The throb of horror struck the sun,
“ And Winter’s sterile reign begun ;
“ Fruitful provinces were lost
“ In mantling snows and binding frost.
“ Oh! day of darkness for the earth,
“ Denser than wrapt it at its birth ;
“ All nature shared the dreadful spell,
“ When Eden’s homeless exile fell.
“ The air, wont whilom to infuse
“ The flowerets with refreshing dews,
“ Now shivering sheds the frozen hoar,
“ Or raves distraught, with frenzied roar.

“ The flowers in wonder kiss the gale,
“ That smites them with the unkindly hail

“ Yielding their perfume as they die,
“ In sweet, forgiving charity.
“ A sad and plaintive measure weighs
“ On all the song-birds’ woodland lays;
“ The groves o’er blighted beauty moan,
“ And rivers run with muffled tone;
“ Meadows and valleys leprous lie,
“ Smitten with frozen lethargy;
“ Nature bemoaning her first sorrow,
“ Sad elegy for every morrow.
“ The sun, all ignominious shone,
“ His glory shorn, his kingdom gone;
“ The gleaming ice, the flashing snow,
“ Deride his pallid, powerless glow.
“ But, lo! the great deliverance came;
 “ El Shaddai crushed the baneful ban;
“ He, for the honour of His name,
 “ Made His first covenant with man;
“ Opened again the vernal way,
“ Lo! he returns, the Lord of Day.”

He paused—the sun with wrestling might,
Through cloudy phalanx shines serene;

Launching his javelins of light,
As mist and cloud fly from the scene ;
And genial airs, on pinions weak,
Fly down from every mountain peak ;
Play with the grey locks of the seer,
Brush from his cheek the lingering tear,
As, lifting his arms again on high,
With inspiration in his eye,
In silent intercession stood
Above the spell-bound multitude.

The answer is already given ;
The threshold of the heavens riven ;
Tears rain from every stedfast eye,
Beaming in blissful ecstasy.
As bursting springs, so joy awakes,
In song and frantic laughter breaks ;
Imprisoned hearts, as birds set free,
Fly forth on wings of melody ;
A wild euroclydon of song,
Ascending from the mighty throng ;
The song of Moses, hallowed strain,
The echoes catch the glad refrain ;

The everlasting hills arise,
Sounding the anthem to the skies ;
It mingles with the choral hymn
Of bright, angelic seraphim ;
And soaring still, the grateful psalm
Pierces the heaven's eternal calm ;
Jehovah, bending from His throne,
Accepts the tribute as His own.





BASHAN'S primeval forests rest,
By noontide lassitude oppressed ;
Sighing, like sleepers in their sleep,
As fitful zephyrs o'er them sweep :
Hushed, the grand symphonious swell,
By giant oaks expressible.
The basking panther, in her lair,
Purrs in the warm ambrosial air :
The shy gazelles now seek the shade
And pasture in the sylvan glade ;
Bashan's wild oxen, sweating, lave
In Jabbock's cool, yet waning wave.

The hoary walls of Tob outvie
The clouds that fleck the azure sky ;
Grim fastness of the chief, whose name
Thrills Ammon warriors with shame.
Fit eyrie for a man of prey !
Great porphyry boulders guard the way ;
Vast rocks, as if in combat hurled
By giants of the early world.
Here and there, an opening glen
Rings with the laugh of armed men ;
Retainers, met in boisterous sport,
Apt courtiers of so grim a court.
As storm-clouds rush to Lebanon,
 His battlemented cliffs, the tower
To which the scattered tempests run,
 Assembled there regain their power ;
So these, the routed wreck of war,
Muster round Jephthah from afar ;
Retrieve their strength, as they obey
His lofty will and mighty sway.

Now the ivy and hyssop fall,
Festooning every battered wall

Of the stern stronghold, grey with age,
Defiant still of tempest's rage.
The tufted grass springs from the rent
In many a fissured battlement,
Whence clanking bones swing to and fro,
Grisly memorials of the foe.
In the cool shade without the gate,
Camels all harnessed ruminatè ;
Within the warrior chiefs resort,—
Heroes in many a martial feat ;—
Where the great Jephtha holds his Court
The elders of his tribe to meet.

Never forgotten, if once seen,
Stalwart, magnificent in mien ;
Like men begot in days of old—
The fable by tradition told—
When erring angels fell bewrayed
With the loveliness of mortal maid.
Pacing the ground, his eyes flashed fire,
As with clenched hand he quelled his ire ;

A panther, to all but him untamed,
Rose as his master's glances flamed,
Fawning, walked at his master's knee,
With an instinctive sympathy.
With voice constrained and brow compressed,
The chief the elders thus addressed :

“ Ye princes of my father's tribe !

“ Why seek the Ishmael of his tent ?

“ The exile, whom your jeer and jibe

“ Drove into this far banishment ?

“ We took ye as ye came for foes :

“ Ere morn, your flesh had battened crows ;

“ Only your bones from these walls had hung :

“ Our fowls, I wist are hungry birds.

“ We rarely parley with the tongue ;

“ We find the sword more swift than words.

“ Blanch not ; your every numbered hair

“ Is safe as that which the angels wear.

“ What seek ye in this banishment ?

“ The terraced vineyard of the vine,

“ Where presses gush with fragrant wine ?

“ Behold the pine here spreads her tent,

“ Hard cedars on these mountains stand,
“ This frontier of our fatherland.
“ Seek ye the gardens where the trees
“ Form arbours of delightful ease ?
“ Our hardy forests, I confess,
“ Are sorry bowers of idleness.”

In the silence ensuing an elder rose,
His face with deep emotion glows,
His garment from his head he flung,
His grey locks o'er his shoulders hung.

“ Lion of Gilead ! the vineyard pines,
“ The foxes have destroyed our vines ;
“ The wild boar and hyena seize
“ Our arbours of delightful ease.
“ Vineyard and orchard once were mine,
“ With folds of sheep and herds of kine ;
“ My shepherds piping on their reeds,
“ While the vast flock securely feeds
“ O'er meadows where sweet waters flow,
“ And sheep-bells tinkle and oxen low.

“ The sheep-cotes now in ruin lie,
“ My shepherds slain, my meadows dry ;
“ War and rapine, wild beast and bird,
“ Have ravened on both flock and herd ;
“ The jackals haunt, with howlings dire,
“ Our villages all burned with fire ;
“ Gateless our silent cities stand,
“ Their wretched residents unmanned ;
“ In wilderness and waste they wait
“ Deliverance from their dismal fate.
“ Lion of Gilead ! we come to thee :
“ Let but thy banner flutter free,
“ A mighty army soon shall stand,
“ To hurl the invader from our land.
“ The beacon is piled on every height,
“ Ready to blaze abroad to-night ;
“ The welcome summons, the fiery post :
“ Jephtha ! wilt thou command the host ? ”

The chieftain's visage all changeful wrought,
With sudden force the question fell ;
And all the wild excitement caught,

As hearts with louder pulses tell
The swift expectancy of thought,
All wait, attent with ear and eye,
The agitated chief's reply.

" Princes of Gilead ! hear ye me !
" Has the stern past no memory ?
" A sepulchre yawns here to-day,
" And angered thoughts rise up at bay.
" My wife's lorn shade between us stands :
" Princes ! her blood is on your hands.
" She slowly withered—aye, daily pined
 " Beneath your curse, your family ban :
" What blood-avenger can she find
 " Other than he, the lonely man,
" Whom loving, she loved unto death ;
" No murmur in her latest breath.
" Faugh ! 'tis years sithence she died ;
 " Yet now her fragile form I see,
" Her little daughter at her side,
 " Listening—I too—attentively,

" As the lovely voice like music rings,

" And some didactic fiction sings.

" Aha! fiction remembered well!

" Elders! hear ye the parable.

" When Nature sat disconsolate

" At Eden's angel-guarded gate ;

" The trees their primal discord wage,

" And thus expressed their sylvan rage.

" The fig tree said, ' I shall not go

" ' To leprous mountains, chill with snow ;

" ' I too must sicken there, and die

" ' In yonder hard inclement sky.

" ' Let me in Eden spread my root

" ' And yield my sweet and mellow fruit ;

" ' Yon Alpine home is for the pine,

" ' And vernal Paradise is mine.' "

" ' Sweet sister,' said the graceful palm,

" ' Anger disturbs thy leafy calm.

" ' In the sweet garden of the Lord,

" ' We all the heavenly dew absorbed ;

“ ‘Thou hadst no happier lot than mine,
“ ‘To bend with fruit, and gush with wine :
“ ‘Yet would I blossom none the less
“ ‘In earth’s remotest wilderness ;
“ ‘And strive—if Nature wills—even there
“ ‘To wile our liege lord of his care,
“ ‘And point him from the barren sod
“ ‘Upward, to the Home of God.’
“The gentle olive, also spake,
“Her leaves with sweet emotion shake :
“ ‘I, too, would yield my fruit and oil,
“ ‘To comfort him in cheerless toil ;
“ ‘Should Nature please, I gladly go
“ ‘To wilderness, or waste of snow,
“ ‘And strive in patience to unlock
“ ‘The fatness of the flinty rock.’
“Then all the trees in tumult rose,
“As when the fierce tornado blows.
“The pomegranate spake in irony,
“ ‘Behold what sweet humility !
“ ‘Let them with fruitless cedars go,
“ ‘In yon congenial climate grow.’

“ Wrathfully exclaimed the vine,
“ ‘ What is thy palm juice to my wine ?
“ ‘ Thy stony produce aptly apes
“ ‘ The golden clusters of my grapes.’
“ The citron said, ‘ Go with the fir,
“ ‘ Grow fruitless in yon sepulchre,
“ ‘ While I, on bending branches, hold
“ ‘ Nectar, in goblets all of gold.’
“ Then Nature murmured, ‘ Be it so ;
“ ‘ The cedar and the pine shall go,
“ ‘ But—in their mountain solitude,
“ ‘ Disease—decay—shall ne’er intrude ;
“ ‘ Winter shall never come between
“ ‘ The glow of their perennial green.’
“ When winter came with withering blast,
“ And searèd leaves were falling fast,
“ The trees all naked in the cold,
“ On distant Lebanon, behold
“ The pine and cedars living green,
“ The atmosphere around, serene.
“ Then cried the trees, ‘ Oh, hasten down,
“ ‘ To shield us in your sheltering gown.’

“ ‘Nay,’ said the cedar; ‘when the sun
“ ‘Shone merrily around your bowers,
“ ‘You banished us to Lebanon;
“ ‘You have your lot, and we have ours.’ ”

The chieftain tauntingly elate,
With laughter rings the vaulted gate;
His falcon rose with flashing eye,
 Snapping in twain her silken jess,
Flapping her wings with eager cry,
 Till quieted by his caress.
A prince of Gilead rose at once,
And thus essayed his meek response.

“ Where is the stately cedar’s pride,
 “ In presence of the woodman’s blow?
“ Would yonder pines the axe deride,
 “ That lays the forest monarch low?
“ He who in sylvan glory stood,
“ Lies prostrate with the underwood.
“ When summer fires these groves affright,
 “ And speed with vehemence of flame,

“ The mighty oak, before their flight,
“ Falls with the thorns in blackened shame ;
“ The beasts of prey, by terror then
“ Emboldened, seek the haunts of men.
“ Jephtha! why should we barter scorn ?
“ Carest thou for thy country's weal ?
“ Our motherland is widowed, lorn,
“ Thou art her son—hear her appeal.
“ The flames of war around her glow,
“ In blighting, withering overthrow.
“ The heathen ridicule her fame,
“ The Gentiles triumph in her shame,
“ Wilt thou, her bravest son, stand by,
“ All heedless of her dying cry ?
“ Let but thy banner flutter free,
“ And Israel's thousands flock to thee.
“ They wait—impatiently await—
“ To break the servitude they hate.”

“ Aha ! the Ammon rats derange
“ The order of your pleasant grange ;
“ Ye seek the weasel, now they seize
“ Possession of your granaries.

“ The weasel is an exile, fled
“ From inhospitable Gilead.
“ He left your barns to bats and elves,
“ Ye must kill the rats I wis yourselves.”

An aged prince, last of his race,
Arose, with quiet, chastened grace,
His wrinkled brow, and tresses white,
His eye's faint beam of waning sight,
His face, all saddened with distress,

He stood, a record of the past,
An aloe, in the wilderness,

Outliving still the simoon's blast.
With ruffled voice, and blanchèd cheek,
The aged man essayed to speak.
Silence paid deference to his age,
His noble name and lineage.

“ What sadder sight can hunter see
“ Than an old lion's lethargy ?
“ Gilead's monarch denizen,
“ By age imprisoned in his den :
“ His shaggy head all white with rime
“ Fettered and tamed at length, by Time.

“ The kingly spirit crushed—inane—
“ No flashing eye or bristling mane :
“ Broken the voice, whose awful roar,
“ Like billows on Philistia’s shore,
“ Rolled, in mighty waves of sound,
“ To crash, on echoing mountains round ;
“ Mournfully sad, his midnight moan,
“ Crouching, forgotten, and alone ;
“ Pining with hunger, night and day,
“ While sleep derides with dreams of prey,
“ While vainly shines the full-orbed moon,
“ Enthroned in her meridian noon :
“ For never will he wander more
“ By Jordan’s oleander shore,
“ By waters gleaming in the light,
“ Like flashing beds of chrysolite.
“ Yea, when before his death-dimmed eye,
“ He sees, with writhing agony,
“ The jabbering wolves and jackals’ strife,
“ Waiting the ebbing tide of life :
“ Emboldened every hour, they wait
“ The grey old king’s unhappy fate.

“ Such weary, hapless lot is mine,
“ In dull despair, to slowly pine ;
“ A prey to proud oppression’s lust,
“ Hastening to dishonoured dust.
“ My noble sons, so good and brave,
“ Sleep—but in no sepulchral grave ;
“ No friend received their parting breath,
“ Nor soothed the convulsive throes of death ;
“ No hand to close the glazing eye,
“ Friendless and unanêled, they die ;
“ Swathed, in dread cerements of fire,
“ Mid ghastly cries and shouts expire.
“ Lion of Gilead ! look on me—
“ Behold my helpless misery !
“ This arm, now nerveless and supine,
“ Once ravened on its prey like thine.”

With tearless eye and haggard air,
He stood, the semblance of despair.
When, standing in the outer light,
A tall, draped figure met the sight,
Flinging his robe from off his head,

He stood revealed, the mighty seer.
A hurried whisper, trembling sped,
Full of anxiety and fear,
While all with sudden tremor scan
The visage of the holy man ;
And all with reverent ear incline,
Attent to the messenger Divine.

“ The beacon fires flame bright and high,
“ The tribes to arms already fly ;
“ On every hill the kindled glow
“ Strikes terror in the expectant foe.
“ Thus saith the Lord to Jephthah, ‘ Rise,
“ ‘ And trample on Mine enemies.’ ”

The prophet turned from eyes intent ;
Unquestioned, as he came, he went.

As, on the Galilean sea,
Fierce, mighty winds fall suddenly,
And billows in confusion roll ;
So fell these words on the chieftain’s soul.
What ! have his hands already caught
The long-sought mirage of his thought ?

Holds he at last, within his hand,
The sword, to free his fatherland ?
His eyes flame, like two beacon fires,
The flash of thought beams wide and far,
Enkindling all a life's desires,
Summons each energy to war.
How grand, to see a mighty soul
Awake, to kindle and control ;
Thrilling with energy of fire,
A weary nation's dead desire.
When the great King of kings draws nigh,—
Armies of angels passing by—
And takes a human instrument,
To wield and work His own intent !

The chieftain grasps the subtle air,
As if to clutch a sceptre there ;
Muttering aloud, he paced the ground,
Unconscious of the princes round.
“ Surely, the God of Heaven has hurled
“ To some new sphere the tottering world ;
“ She seems to tremble 'neath my feet,
“ As if her rocky heart doth beat ;

“ Her fevered pulse I seem to hear,
“ Through the hot panting atmosphere.
“ Pooh! surely Hell’s hot, lambent sea
“ Has overleaped its boundary.
“ The air scathes, like the simoon’s breath,
“ That laps the sultry sea of Death.
“ Long have I waited for the day,
“ As the patient panther for her prey ;
“ Long, long, long, has it lured my lust,
“ Like Sodom’s golden gourds of dust.
“ Yet no! the fruit will never burst,
“ And aggravate again my thirst.

“ What ho, there! Herdsman to my call!
“ Bring me a bullock from the stall.
“ Hear me, ye princes! I will go
“ And lead the host against the foe!
“ Tell me, shall I be your head,
“ When, ignominious, he hath fled?”
All answer, “ Yea,” with glad acclaim,
“ Head of our house, our tribe, and name ;”
The ox was brought without the gate,
And lowed, unconscious of its fate.

“ Bring me an axe,” the chieftain cried ;
When brought, with giant strength applied,
The mighty ox was cleft in twain,
And then in reeking parts again.
“ So let it be, both near and far,
“ To all who shun this righteous war ;
“ Let every herald haste, elate,
“ With the bloody trophy to the gate.
“ Let every herald of the sign
“ Declare the summons is Divine.
“ Up, princes, up ! within the fort,
“ Welcome all to a warrior’s court.
“ The vaulted voices of the gate,
“ I ween, are weary of debate.
“ The enemy, in yonder plain,
“ Will cut the controversial skein.
“ Kindle the beacon on the height !
“ Let sword and spear be whet to-night.”

With loud acclaim, and tearful eyes,
The whole convention gladly rise,

And soon, nought but the passing wind
Moved through the quiet forsaken gate ;
Only the tranquil sun declined,
Where late the anxious princes sate.





“**L**O! he has gone, the prince of light,
“ In chariot of empyreal fire ;
“ His retinue, in swifter flight,
“ Anticipate their lord’s desire.
“ Farewell ! farewell ! thou radiant friend,
“ Companion of my childhood, thou ;
“ Alas ! such days should ever end
“ And live but in the memory now.”

The evening's golden splendour shone
A halo o'er the maiden's face ;
The light, impatient to be gone,
Yet, lingering, wrapt in last embrace
A form of such transcending grace.

A youth, reclining at her side,
Gazed on her lucent loveliness ;
With face averted, sought to hide
The passion he could ill repress.

"Lo, Reuel ! like a golden sea,
"The light is ebbing rapidly ;
"Its noiseless ripple silvering o'er
"Night's dark and fast-appearing shore.
"Lo ! Hesperus lights his kindling ray,
"Now gleaming in the rosy grey.
"How oft we lingered, to behold
"His radiant gleam from skies of gold !
"Oh, Reuel ! shall we e'er forget
"Those happy days, for ever set ?"
"Nay, Iphigene ! their memory lingers
"Like the scent o'er withered flowers ;

"They rise, like music, when thy fingers

"Wake the silent psaltery's powers.

"How swift our happy childhood fled,

"Like almond blossoms, early shed!

"Life's lovely morning hastes away,

"Expanding to the earnest day."

Oh! happy lot of those who share

The vestal bliss of Eden's pair,

Betrothed of God—tradition says,

Angels the only witnesses.

So Reuel saw Life's blissful scene,

The unconscious maid his Eden queen;

Alas! that in a scene so fair

The lurking serpent has his lair.

"Lo, Iphigene! on every height

"The beacon fires already burn;

"Yon blazing heralds spread to-night

"The tidings brave men, longing, learn.

- “ Obedient to their tongues of fire,
“ Ere morning furls their flags of flame,
“ A gathered host shall greet your sire,
“ And shout allegiance to his name.
“ Oh! gone for ever is the day,
“ When at thy sire’s approving glance,—
“ My steed, at slackened rein, would neigh,—
“ I rode the first to flesh my lance.
“ I, foremost of the foemen, stood,
“ The first to draw the vengeful blood ;
“ Now, other nobler names than mine
“ Will spur at that approving sign.
“ What is a nameless heart and hand
“ Among the princes of the land ?”
- “ Nay, Reuel!—my father’s worth
“ Lay like the precious ore in earth,
“ Until these torrent troubles came,
“ And shewed his value unto fame.
“ He will not turn from such as thee
“ For fretted shreds of ancestry ;

“ No prince of Gilead e’er will stand
“ In Reuel’s place, at his right hand.
“ True prince and noble, only he
 “ Who makes the proud oppressor quail,
“ Who sets the poor at liberty,
 “ And stops the weary prisoner’s wail.
“ Oh ! that this fragile arm could wield
“ A sword in such a glorious field,
“ Strike off the gyves, and break the brand,
“ And free our fettered fatherland ! ”

The thoughts flashed in the maiden’s eyes,
As meteors in midnight skies,
Or, lightnings on a summer eve,
Which flash, and yet no darkness leave ;
With arm upraised, her gleaming face
The twilight clothed with sacred grace,
And in her white and simple dress
She stood,—a Pagan pythoness.

Passion, still unrelieved in sighs,
Glared from her young companion’s eyes.

His vision reels, his senses whirl,

The fierce emotion held repressed,
Longing to clasp the lovely girl

For ever to his aching breast.
Strange inconsistency of love !
A fickle vapour makes it rove ;
With laughter forced, and smiling eye,
His wayward fancy made reply.

“ Aha ! Jeshurun’s foes shall flee
“ Before her maiden chivalry ;
“ When Hebrew damsels shall have won
“ The fame of Gentile amazon,
“ Ye hero fathers, wake, awake !
“ Your gory locks with envy shake ;
“ Behold ! your sons the distaff wield,
“ Your daughters don the sword and shield.”

The stripling’s laugh rung out again ;
The maiden turned away in pain ;
Hot tears in turbulence confessed
The emotion she in vain repressed.

" Alas! as fledglings from their nest,
" Long-hidden thoughts have flown confessed,
" I pray you let them flutter free
" From the arrows of your irony.
" The words were traitors to declare
 " The formless thoughts till now untold—
" Mere threads of musing—knit of Care,
 " Which Hope embroiders o'er with gold ;
" All formless thoughts, that flit and flee,
" Like gossamers of phantasy ;
" Thoughts that with my spindle run,
" Often breaking while they are spun."
The maiden turned away in pain ;
The youth was at her side again ;
His words stole softly on her ears ;
Assuaged the anguish of her tears.

" Alas! my speech, as breath of frost
" On flowers, thy soul has crossed.
" As summer clouds, of transient flight,
" Oh, let their shadow fade in light !

" I would not that a shade should e'er
" Becloud thy spirit's atmosphere ;
" Less, that a word of mine should stir
" Its finest woven gossamer.
" As Sharon's rose 'mid Hermon's snows
" Wouldst thou be 'mid conflicting foes,
" Where the knell of death rings out the time
" To war's discordant jangling chime,
" Where foe meets foe in mortal strife,
" And strong men wrestle hard for life."

" Nay, Reuel ! thou hast not caught
" The meaning of my harmless thought ;
" 'Tis not for me to wield the sword—
" Mine is to heal the wound it gored ;
" Oft when you bring, at break of day,
" The wounded, in the night's affray ;
" When, with my maidens at the gate,
" Expecting some unkindly fate,
" We bind the wounded limb or head,
" Or close the eyes of the honoured dead ;

" 'Tis then I have longed to stay the strife,
" E'en with the offering of my life.
" 'Tis sad to wait, from morn till eve,
" From eve till morn, with longing grieve ;
" Haunted with dreams of loved ones slain,
" Then weep, and hope, and weep again.
" Hope and suspense alternate fly,
" Across my spirit's clouded sky.
" If midnight winds in my lattice moan,
" I wake as startled with a groan.
" As a timid fawn, at the rustling grass,
" I tremble if but shadows pass ;
" Till oft I long with thee to ride,
" All fearless, at my father's side,
" Rather than pine, a prey to fear,
" A cagèd bird with the fowler near."

" Ah, Iphigene ! no single life
" Will ever end this bitter strife.
" Many brave men laid low will be,
" Ere comes the glorious victory ;

" When o'er the corses of the slain,
" Peace shall return to our land again.
" But, come ! the dews thy robes have wet ;
" Ere this my trusty band are met,
" And wonder at their chief's delay,
" On such a night to be away.
" Oh ! shall we ever, ever more,
" Together these dear hills explore ?
" If that our happy lot shall be,
" I'll win a trophy worthy thee."





THE watch-fires still burn brightly,
As the merry south winds blow ;
And brave hearts leap as lightly
As the flames that o'er them glow ;
Piling the fuel upon the fires,
Whetting the weapons of their sires ;
Gripping the hilt with impatient hand,
Slaying the air to ensure command.

Along the dawn's entrenchments grey,
The vanguard legions of the day,
Assault with piercing bolts of light,
Where wavering darkness breaks in flight ;
The morning clouds, like penons, flee
In gold and crimson blazonry ;
As from the orient leaps the sun,
And Day's stern purpose is begun.

Prolong the hours, thou radiant king !
The memories of the past we bring.
Stay, as on Gibeon's crest to-day,
While Gilead swoops upon his prey.
Oh, mellow morn ! thy cheering rays
Shine with the light of ancient days ;
When Israel in his strength arose
Omnipotent above his foes.
Again the trumpet sounds afar
Its silvern summons to the war.
The tented hosts are side by side,
Each by the banner of his tribe ;

The ancestral ensign and the spear
Before the chieftains' tents appear.

The tents are struck as the gay sun shines,
Glancing along the marshaled lines ;
The ancient hills forget their years,
And echo back the frantic cheers
As Jephtha on his steed appears.
Mispeh's hoary walls find voice,
And with the multitude rejoice.

The brave, intrepid leader
Rode down the exulting line ;
Firm as the northern cedar
Among the waving pine.
His bronzed and brave retainers
Rode instinctively at hand ;
With him the fierce maintainers
Of Freedom in the land.
They wear no gilded armour,
No deftly-woven mail ;
They seek no martial glamour,
Nor with strategy assail,

But with lightning onset charging,
As their robes fly in the wind,
They, like summer fires enlarging,
Spread their track of death behind ;
Like the buffalo on Bashan,
Left by his foes at bay,
Last of his herd and nation,
Untamed or led away.

In phalanx formed, the men repress
Their fervour for the chief's address.
" Sons of the sires, whom Gideon led
" As victors over Midian's dead,
" Blanch not at the fierce array
" Of yon opposing foe to-day.
" Remember those who sadly pine
" Beside love's violated shrine.
" Let vengeance in your hands be strong,
" Think of the inexpressible wrong.
" Behold the foe in yonder plain,
" To whom your daughters cried in vain ;

“ When the foul craven pleads for life,
“ Remember the dishonoured wife ;
“ Your sisters, victims to his lust :
“ Crush the destroyer in the dust !
“ Let memory of burnt homesteads fire
“ Each kindled soul with vengeful ire :
“ Your children perished in the flame,
“ Your little ones, who bore your name :
“ No longer chew the bitter cud
“ Of unavengèd wrong or blood.
“ Swear ye, before the Lord to-day,
“ To strike for the dear dishonoured clay.”

Ten thousand swords flashed, raised on high,
Tears shone in many an upturned eye,
As the loud shout, spontaneous, rose,
“ We swear! destruction to our foes!”

“ Remember the issues of the strife :
“ Defeat is death, and victory life !
“ Let the stern purpose stifle fear,
“ Advance without a shout or cheer !

“ Then grapple death, in the stern *melee*,
“ And wrest from his hands the victory !
“ And lo ! the spirits of the dead
“ Shall hover o’er each filial head.”

On the hills beyond all eyes survey
The foe, drawn up in dread array.
The harnessed coursers plunge and rear,
Reined by the anxious charioteer,
Ready to hurl the scythe-armed car,
And mow their deadly swathe of war.
On either wing the slingers stand,
Swift of foot and sure of hand ;
Archers, with their bows all bent,
And javelin men, with eye attent,
Eager to launch with fatal aim
Their poisoned shafts or darts of flame ;
The restless horsemen in the rear
Stand ready with the couchant spear ;
Their fiery steeds chafe bit and rein,
Their harness bells ring o’er the plain ;
The central host—the footmen—wait,
With memories of the past elate.

Before this stern and dread array
The Hebrew remnant stands at bay ;
In wedge-like phalanx, man to man,
With Judah's standard in the van.

The birds are singing in the spray,
The flies are buzzing in the air,
The conies in the valley play,
As if no fearful strife were there ;
The priests the silver trumpets blow :—
The blast is challenged by the foe :—
The standards move—the ranks advance ;
Each sword is drawn, and couched each lance ;
And the grand hymn of battle swells
To the rolling tread of the infantry :
Ammon derides, with shouts and yells,
As the serried wedge of men they see.

The clarion sounds along their line,
And the chariot horses wildly whine—
Pawing the ground impatiently,
Chafing and rearing to be free,

When, darting off at the slackening rein,
Madly they charge across the plain.
Swift as the greyhound strikes the deer
Rushed Gilead's nimble mountaineer ;
And, running with the charging steed,
With the swift falchion stays its speed :
The wounded horses, whirling, flee,
Till spent with their dying agony ;
The remnant plunge with desperate prance,
And broken fall on the Hebrew lance.

With shield upheld, and poisèd spear,
Silent, without a shout or cheer,—
 The Hebrew infantry advancing,—
Their tramp with trembling shakes the ground
With muffled, awe-inspiring sound ;
 The sunlight on their weapons glancing.
With shouts, and cries, and hurrying feet,
 With the clangour of arms, and cymbals'
 clash,
The Ammon warriors swift and fleet
 Against the Hebrew phalanx crash.

Men struggle for life with panting breath,
No mercy given by either foe ;
The sharp, quick cry goes out in death,
And fierce is the clatter of blow on blow.
The battle-axe on the helmet rings ;
The hate-nerved arm the weapon swings ;
The cloven skull is open thrown ;
The war-cry gurgles in the groan ;
Or the victim falls, with a ghastly scowl,
As the sword is withdrawn from the gushing
bowel.

The charging horses neigh delight,
As they sniff the phrensy of the fight ;
Spurred by their riders, in vain they rear,
And plunge to death on the Hebrew spear.

The conflict wavers to and fro,
Where Death, with sweeping weapon, stands,
Holding to each conflicting foe
The balance of valour in his hands.
The Ammon horsemen charge and reel
Against the Hebrew lines of steel :

Each desperate charge, with yells and cheers,
Falls harmless on the unflinching spears,
When one brave rider spurs again
O'er the piled breastwork of the slain :
Leaping his horse from the seething bank,
He plunges amid the serried rank.
His followers rush through the opening gap
Where their brave leader maintains his hap :
The phalanx wavers—despairing, they cry ;
The recreants yield—they break—they fly !
As they fly they fall, and strew the plain,
Like the ripe corn laid by the latter rain.

Oh, Israel ! is thy deliverance fled
With the gallant lives of the honoured dead ?
Will thy hopes all die with those who bleed
Their precious life-blood on the mead ?
Hast thou no help in One Divine ?
Behold ! behold ! a rallying line !
Lo ! mid the panic and dismay,
Jephtha's brave horsemen stand at bay ;

Cool and firm amid the flight,
They meet the crisis of the fight.
Their leader in his saddle rose :

Lifting his bloody sword on high,
He cried, " O Lord, before our foes,
" Behold, again thy people fly ;
" Now be it according to thy word—
" Scatter them all before my sword ;
" Whate'er first from my house I see
" Shall be a sacrifice to Thee.
" Now, merry men, to do or die,
" And ' Jephtha to the rescue ! ' cry."

Like hunter baffled in his trial,

So stopped the now triumphant foe :
Before that well-known cry they quail ;
Before the fearful onset fail ;—

And fly in final overthrow.

With desperate valour Ammon strives,
Reckless and lavish of their lives ;
Like breaking waves their legions came,
Struggling to keep their past-earned fame :

The phrensy of the carnage caught,
Singly and in groups they fought.
The baffled veterans hopeless fled,
Or fell—to swell the mighty dead.

More fearful slaughter still was wrought,
When round their gods the foemen fought ;
In fierce despair, resolved to die
Under their gods' observant eye.
Terrific conflict ! but in vain—
Soon gods were captive, priests were slain.
Hah ! Milcom, Ashtaroth, and Baal,
Your oracles told a lying tale ;
The eyes of the pythoness are dim :
Tear her in pieces, limb from limb.

Ye augurs ! divining by the liver—
By flight of birds—by beasts' entrails—
By arrows drawn from magic quiver—
Lo ! all your sage enchantment fails.
Ye necromancers !—rogues or fools—
Hear ye the laughter of the ghouls ?

Ye wise astrologers ! lo ! Mars
Crosses the influence of your stars.
The elders of Rabbath to the gateway repair,
And Ammonite matrons and maidens are
there :

The old are loquacious, the young are all gay ;
With confidence waiting the news of the fray.
Oh, fly to the altars, and seek at their shrine
The protection of gods no longer benign !
Ye merchants of Minneth, farewell to your ease,
Your granaries full, his wrath may appease ;
With the fates unpropitious make peace
with your grain,
For the king with his princes and priests
are all slain.





THE sentinel sighs on Mispah's tower,
As the dial marks the passing hour :
 " No tidings yet," he said ;
What means his anxious, wistful gaze
O'er hills suffused in summer haze ?
 Why bows the watchman's head ?
His visage wears a changeful mien—
Now stern, now anxious, now serene—
 As flits his reverie.
Why hums he not the careless air,
So wont to wile away his care ?
 What trouble now has he ?

The city elders oft repair,
Mounting the winding turret stair,
 To greet the sentinel.
“No tidings yet,” is his reply
To every sad inquiring eye :
 They answer, “It is well.”

The city streets are all forsaken,
No sound their stillness to awaken
 But swallows in the eaves ;
Or ringdoves cooing as they feed
On housetops, where some cummin seed
 Lies ripening in sheaves.
Closed are the gates of the bazaar,
The stalls are shut with bolt and bar ;
 The busy merchants fled.
’Twould seem, but for the signs of life
In all the silent city rife,
 A city of the dead.

The citizens crowd round the gate,
All anxious—some disconsolate ;

Some gather into groups without,
Some move with downcast looks about.
If the young children meet in play,
The mothers call them soon away.

They wait—oh! agony intense
Of heart and soul racked with suspense;
When life and death, and love and hate,
Are hidden in some gathering fate.
The trembling women seek in prayer
An alternation from despair,
Resolved with poison or the knife
To save their honour with their life.

“Hark! oh, joyous welcome blast!”
The sentinel sounds out at last.
Along the way strains every eye:
“A herald! a herald!” is the cry.
The breathless runner hastens near,
And shouts—attent is every ear.
Oh, welcome sound—“Oh, victory!”
“The foes before our armies flee!”

Some burst in joy like fire in flame,
Some incredulity o'ercame,
Until conviction came with sight
Of garments blood-stained in the fight.
The eager crowd, with joy elate,
Bear up the herald to the gate ;
Thither the people seek their way
For fuller tidings of the fray.

Ye maidens seek the flowers,
And deck the garland gay,
For the brave and true ones, ours,
Who have fought for us to day ;
Weave the chaplet with love's fingers,
Be careful, too, to find
The flowers whose perfume lingers
Like gratitude enshrined.
Oh ! tune the lute and timbrel,
And learn your choicest air,
To meet with clash of cymbal
Those who save you from despair.

Ye matrons, long dejected,
Put on your best attire,
Bring the children, now protected,
From Moloch's idol fire.
The little ones—their treasure—
To whom their fathers yearn,
Teach them some simple measure
To greet their sire's return.
Ho! watchman, raise the standard,
Long furled away in shame,
When, like slaves, we pandered
To swell the Gentile's fame.
Let its merry flap and flutter,
As the winds waft from the slain,
Our grand deliverance utter
From the proud oppressor's reign.
As the quail before the kestral,
Lo! the King of Ammon flies,
With bravery ancestral
The son of Gilead hies.
The cry of blood and slaughter
Spreads to swift Arnon's shore,


His deeply-rolling water
Is crimson with the gore.
Some to the groves are flying,
Beholding Bamath-baal,
Around the altars dying
'Mid the sacred groves they wail.
On Bethpeor the bald eagles
Tower aloft with savage scream,
The scent of blood inveigles
The king-birds from their dream ;
The basking lion growleth
In Jabbok's osier lair,
From the jungle, lo, he prowleth,
And sniffs the subtle air ;
The hyenas of Zeboim
All hasten to the prey,
Where the foes of our Eloihim
Lie slain upon the way.

The sentinel sighs on Mispah's tower,
As the dial marks the passing hour :
" They come not yet," he said.

He looks o'er the mountains clothed in light,
Then watches the swallows and doves in flight
 Sailing above his head ;
Pacing the battlements to and fro,
Grounding his spear with sudden blow,
 With restless thoughts imbued ;
Flashing at times with laughter loud —
Again they flit like a passing cloud—
 What means his changeful mood ?

The city elders oft repair,
Mounting the winding turret stair,
 To greet the sentinel.
“ They come not yet,” is his reply
To every glad enquiring eye :
 They answer, “ It is well.”

The citizens crowd round the gate,
With fulness of joy inebriate ;
The festal scene, the general glee,
Are like the joy of jubilee :



Festoons of palm, with garlands of flowers,
And ensigns of tribes hang from the towers ;
And laughter wreathed in smiles to-day
Makes many a rugged visage gay.

The minstrel maidens, with song and dance,
Ravish the ear, and the eye entrance,
As their mothers look on abstractedly ;
To the absent ones their fancies flee,
The fond farewell, the kisses that burn
Of those who perchance will ne'er return ;
They start from their dream as their children
near

Kiss from the cheek the tell-tale tear.

Hark ! hearts leap with wild delight,
And every eye is strained in sight,
As the blast rings from the tower.
Lo ! in the mountain pass appears
The flash of arms, the glint of spears,
Like a distant summer shower.
The joy, at first impetuous,
Wanes and becomes incredulous,

Watching the distant sheen.

'Tis only the rounding sun, at play
With the rolling torrents' silver spray,

'Mid the gorge's shadow seen.

But, lo! amid the distant trees,

A banner waves upon the breeze :

" They come, ye damsels sing!"

Ah, no! 'tis the pomegranate's bloom,

Or some flamingo's scarlet plume

The sun-illumining.

Nay, hark! the distant clarion's blast,

So clear and shrill—they come at last,

The gates wide open fling!

It is some hapless heron's cry,

Quailing beneath some falcon's eye,

Falls with despairing wing;

Or some more distant vulture's scream,

Scenting some offal on the stream,

Or carcase by the way.

Nay, listen to the glorious ring

Of the song which the conquering legions
sing—

Ye maidens, sound the lay!

Lo! they dance on flying feet,
Fathers and brothers and lovers meet ;
With sounding psaltery, harp, and lute,
The warbling pipe, sackbut, and flute,
Tinkling bells, and timbrels' thrum,
The cymbals' clash, and rolling drum ;
Children and maidens change the strain,
While the people catch the glad refrain :
Onward they dance, singing the pean,
Led on by the lovely Iphigene.

Oh! the solemn swell of the ocean of sound,
Which the winds waft on, and the hills
rebound ;

The unison voice of a host of men,
A unison soul for its origin ;
The silver song of the children and daughters
Like a lark singing o'er rolling waters,
Or an angel's voice o'er the deep profound,
Of God's great creation singing around.

But why hath silence, like a calm,
Hastily hushed the mighty psalm,

Like the voice of the forest suddenly still,
When the gust winds soar away at will ;
The army stops with a sudden shock,
Like waves thrown back from the sullen rock,
All stricken with terror, blanched with dread,
As if the lines of Ammonite dead,
Had irsen again, renewed for slaughter,
 Instead of their children and sisters, led
By Iphigene, the chieftain's daughter ;
Whose lovely charms all eyes entrance,
Gracefully leading on the dance,
Unconscious of the sudden doom.
That consecrates her to the tomb.

The chieftain watched with fixèd eye
The well-belovèd form draw nigh ;
Until a dim and dreadful haze
Obscured the long-absorbing gaze.
With an involuntary moan,

 With terrible agony replete ;—
Who heard will ne'er forget the tone,—
 He fell as dead at his charger's feet.

Ah! everyone remembers now
Their noble chieftain's awful vow ;
A whispered horror rose on the ear,
Creeping and rolling from van to rear.

The maid, with arms extended wide,
Flew to her prostrate father's side.
" Father, my father, lo! thy child,"
She sobbed, or shrieked, with accent wild.
She chafed his hands between her own,
She kissed the lips, whose mournful moan
And heavy, long-drawn sigh express
Sorrow's returning consciousness.
She kissed his lips, his brow, his cheek :
" My father, darling father, speak!"
The eyes obey the fond behest,
He drew his head from her cradling breast ;
" My child," he whispered, "*my* daughter,
" Would God I had fallen in the slaughter :
 " Oh! wretch, for ever hence, abhorred,
" I have shed thy virgin life as water.
 " I opened my mouth unto the Lord ;
 " With awful vow His help implored.

"*My* child? Thou art no longer mine;
"Lo! Lord, Thy child—Thy daughter—
Thine."

The noble nerve, the iron will,
Obeyed their stern commander still.
He rose; the trembling limbs confessed
His fearful tyranny of soul.
He drew the maiden to his breast,
While throbbing hearts o'er moments toll.
"*My* child," he said, "thou art the Lord's;
"Lo! he hath prospered all our swords."

She put aside her sire's embrace,
She passed her fingers o'er her face;
Opening her large and lustrous eye,
His daughter, *his* child, made reply.

"My father, deal as thou wilt with me;
"Redeem thy vow, thine integrity.
"Let man be faithful, and God adored;
"The enemy fled before thy sword.

“ His hand has redeemèd Israel,
“ And put to shame the power of Baal ;
“ To the sacred oath, my father, bow,
“ Deal with me according to thy vow.”

Her silver voice, unruffled and clear ;
Her eye restraining the rebel tear ;
Her hand on her heart, to stay its pain,
Where passionate pulses surge in vain.
The father beheld in her calm the token,
The victim accepted, and *he*, heart-broken ;
He had never known until now, no, never,
How dear was the child, now lost for ever.
What had he, in the wide world beside ?
And the desolate soul for mercy cried.
Mercy ! What mercy ? Was the Lord wroth,
In requiring man to fulfil his oath ?
The vow was accepted, God prospered his
sword,
How could he falseswear a merciful Lord ?
No ! though his soul should rend in twain,
And his clouded life melt away like rain,

Like Abram of old, — the brave sufferer
sighed,

“ Perhaps even yet, the Lord will provide.”

These burning thoughts of harrowing pain,
Like irate vipers girt his brain.
A moment charmed, as the voice of his
child

Again the writhing thoughts beguiled.

“ Father! my last request impart,

“ Suffer thy child to mourn apart,

“ And o’er the mountains to bemoan,

“ The visions of my girlhood flown,

“ ’Ere two full moons thy child allow,

“ Then do according to thy vow.”

Oh! the intensity of woe!

Expressed in the father’s answer, “Go;”

He turned away with shrouded face,

Without a kiss, or last embrace.

The crowd, their seried mass divide,

Opening a weeping avenue,

The maid and her companions glide
Through the people, sobbing on either side,
And the men, whose prowess could sub-
due
The men of Ammon, weeping too.





O! the bright sun, High Priest of
Light,

Enters the sanctuary—Night;
Raising his arm again, to slay
Time's sacrificial victim—Day.
The fire through the closed portal gleams,
The scarlet blood beneath it streams,
Congeals in pools of crimson gore,
Or purples on the outer floor.
All nature bows, entranced and still,
The mantling mists veil vale and hill;

In heaven—God's tabernacle court—
The congregating stars resort.

The martyr maiden and her train,
To mountain solitudes attain ;
The fond retreats of kinder fate,
So homeless now and desolate.
The birds this eve, as yester eve,
Warble, as if no heart could grieve ;
And fold their heads beneath their wing,
Without one weird imagining.
The little conies on the hills,
Mid verdure where the dew distils,
All careless play from mound to mound,
Where homeless miles stretch far around.

“ Will he not come ? ” the maiden said ;
Her brave heart yearned to stay the
light ;
“ Oh ! will he mourn when I am dead ? ”
The blinding tears obscured her sight.

Her maidens lured her to her tent,
Her fragile strength was well-nigh spent.
The brazier shed a lurid glare
Around the tent and outer air.
“ He will not come to-night,” she said—
She threw herself upon the bed ;
“ Oh, more than brother thou to me !”
She moaned aloud convulsively.

Ten thousand round that mountain lay,
And watched like angered hounds at bay ;
Aye, fondly watched, and watching wept ;
All hearts in Israel were bereft ;
And o'er them all the Heart Divine,
Of deeper, truer love, the shrine.
The shepherd shelters in His breast,
And lulls the stricken lamb to rest.

Ha ! who is this in haggard guise ?
Before the tent unushered stands,
The misery gleaming from his eyes,
In fetters holds the clenched hands ;

The wakeful maidens all survey
The stalwart form without dismay.
This son of sorrow—who is he ?
This morning crowned for bravery,—
Tear the wreath from off his brow—
He trembles as a leaflet now.

A strange, involuntary cry—
The voice when joy o'erleaps distress—
Escapes him, as his hungry eye
Devours the maiden's loveliness :
As pilgrims, through the desert's haze,
Behold Beersheba's living green,
With sudden cry, and fevered gaze,
They greet the fair unfolding scene—
The emerald sward,—the olive grove,—
So glared his eyes with longing love.

Love's light will scale the drowsy keep,
Where captives lie ensnared by sleep ;
And trance and dream his power confess,
And fly the awakening consciousness.

“ From childhood, so our lives entwine,
“ And love of thee gave strength to mine :
“ And like the scent of vine, endued
“ My soul with all its fortitude.
“ It nerved my arm with skill and might,
“ In the deadly feud with the Ammonite.
“ Fired by the chief’s approving smile,
 “ Plunging headlong in the slaughter,
“ Daring and doing all the while,
 “ To prove me worthy of his daughter.
“ Dreams—false as visions that beguile
 “ The desert traveller’s sight with water.
“ Ah ! have I grieved thine angel soul,
“ With feelings broken from control ?
“ At the sight of thee the heart o’erflows
“ As rivers, with the melting snows,
“ Held icebound in this aching breast ;
“ They rush at will to be expressed ;
“ ’Tis weary in one’s heart to bear
“ Affections frozen with despair.”

The crescent moon was in the West.
The corpse of the old one on her breast ;

The mingled voices of the night
Arose in the weird mysterious light ;
The dreary whooping of the owl,
The sudden scream of startled fowl,
The wild ass braying from the wold,
The ban dog baying from the fold ;
The bark of the fox—the jackal's wail,
The panting wolves on deadly trail ;
The plaintive murmur of the river,
The trees around that seemed to shiver,
As wayward night winds sobbing pass,
Whispering weirdly to the grass,
And ghosts of sound in faint vibration,
 Haunting the silence everywhere ;
The voices of the far creation,
 Thrilling through the tranquil air.
The mingled sounds and gloom oppress
The maiden's fevered consciousness ;
The very stillness of the night
Seemed the presence of the Infinite ;
The utter homelessness of soul,
Broke down the brave young heart's control.

“ What is passionate love to me,
“ Fronting yon dread uncertainty ?
“ Oh, Reuel ! will the fearful knife,
“ Cut through the inner threads of life ?
“ Will all of Iphigene expire
“ With the charred embers of the fire ?
“ Will nought but death—all death suffice
“ To form the ghastly sacrifice ?—
“ Should angels wing my soul to bliss,
“ Across yon dark and drear abyss ;
“ If future lot exists for me,
“ There, Reuel, I will wait for thee.”

“ Nay, Iphigene ! we meet not there.”
His voice was bitter with despair ;
“ The hell within will soon o’erflow,
“ When you, my guardian angel, go.
“ No, maiden ! No ! We meet no more ;
“ My spirit pinion cannot soar
“ To yonder radiant realm of light ;
“ Whither thy seraph soul takes flight.

“ Ha! ha! the foolish daw may love
“ The cooing, fledgling, turtle dove ;
“ Yea, strive to learn the unknown tongue,
“ In which her sweet love-notes are sung.
“ But nature, in the fair one’s breast,
“ Awakes, with new desires confest ;
“ And soon with a kindred mate she flies,
“ Away to the southern sunny skies ;
“ Leaving the carrion bird alone,
“ Despondingly, to seek his own ;
“ In filthy surfeit drown his woes,
“ And batten with his kindred crows.
“ No, maiden! No! ’Tis a fond device
“ Of love in yonder paradise ;
“ But hollow mockery to the soul,
“ Where Love and Passion seething roll.
“ No, maiden! thou hast been to me
“ The shrine of my idolatry.
“ When thou art gone, my horoscope—
“ Eclipsed for ever, without hope,—
“ Has no bright star, with cheering light,
“ To gladden a future black as night.”

" Cease, Reuel, cease ; 'tis not for me
" To listen to such idolatry :
" The Lord, Elohim, he hath heard,
" Oh Reuel, every uttered word.
" Quench in thy heart this earthborn flame ;
" So live that mention of thy name
" Shalt, as the frankincense, arise
" A lustral perfume to the skies ;
" And if it be the will Divine,
" My spirit shall commune with thine ;
" And love shall bind till it unites
" Our hearts before the Throne of Lights."

" Ah, maiden ! oft such thoughts as these
" Have thrilled my soul with energies ;
" But honour and fame were vanity,
" Save that they made me worthier thee.
" When Virtue nestled in my breast,
" I felt that thou wert manifest ;
" Without thee, yonder heaven to me
" Would be distracted anarchy.

" This iris-tinted dream of love,
" In heavens—all black with clouds above—
" Is like the rainbow's bright relief
" Against an atmosphere of grief;
" An evanescent thing of air,
" Eluding to increase despair.

" Does the poor trembling vernal flower
" Love the subtle frost, whose power
" Can change its dew to diamond gems,
" And silver o'er its palsied stems?
" Its kiss is silver, but its breath
" Chills the poor favourite with death.
" Do yonder forest trees delight
" When winds with golden kisses smite?
" Their aureate splendour soon is cast,
" Left naked to the freezing blast.
" Elohim does not love the tomb,
" But life in full perennial bloom;
" He, Lord of Love, will not allow
" Thy father to fulfil his vow.

" Oh, fly with me, then, from a doom
" That clothes His attributes with gloom !
" Oh, fly, love, to some tranquil shore,
" Where war's wild surges never roar ;
" To some bright isle where halcyons brood
" In calm and summer solitude ;
" Where none but the Tyrian oar disturbs
" The placid dream of brooding birds ;
" To some bright shore where the wavelet
 stirs
" The music-haunted sepulchres !
" Those shells whereon the syrens play
" The Sidonian sailor's lullaby.
" Oh, fly, sweet Iphigene, with me
" To some bright island of the sea."

The maiden listened in love's trance,
 For sweet in sorrow are words of love ;
But the youth's despairing eloquence
 Lured her not from her trust above.

" Reuel ! where can we fly from Him
" Who reigns among the cherubim ;

“ Whose footprints are on every shore,
“ Whom earth and the heaven of heavens
adore?

“ He wears the vernal-flowered vest
“ That clothes the naked valley's breast ;
“ With His snow spindle He hath spun
“ The stainless robe of Lebanon.
“ Whither from Him can we ever flee
“ Who holds in his hands the utmost sea ?
“ Thou, God, who dwellest everywhere,
“ I fly to Thee on wings of prayer !
“ As a frightened bird, oh let me rest,
“ Sheltered and hid within Thy breast.
“ Now, Reuel, we must part in pain,
“ Never to meet on earth again.
“ Oh, He shall prove and purge thine heart,
“ To meet me where they never part !”

They rose—the maiden's lofty theme
Shone on the youth with radiant beam ;
With thoughts bewildered with its light,
He wandered out into the night.

Hope yet gave wings to his despair,
He wandered on, he knew not where ;
Without a kiss or parting token,
What wonder that he felt heartbroken ?

She turned away—poor Iphigene !
Seeking again her maiden train.
Oh ! was it a dream—that desolate scene—
A phantom of horror and pain ?
With its anguish of heart—its terror of soul—
And thoughts all maddened with control ?
She gazed but once, on the form descending,
When strange desires were soon contending.
Tears suffused the maiden's vision,
She bowed her head in meek submission ;
Walking on with a tottering step,
Murmuring, " Oh, God, help him yet !"





NAOMI—lo! thy lover leal,
“ With anguish, crieth unto Sheol ;
“ Wife of mine exile manhood—mine !
“ Hast thou no heavenly anodyne
“ For a heavy heart, all racked with pain ?
“ Leechcraft and drugster’s skill are vain ;
“ Thy love hath lulled it oft ere now,
“ Thy soft cheek soothed the fevered brow ;
“ This weary head lain on thy breast,
“ In quieted and peaceful rest.”

Prostrate the mournful ruler lay,
In the grey East, the infant day
Peers through the spangled veil of light,
That spinster stars weave in the night.
The flickering lamp was nearly spent,
Weird shadows, flittering round the tent ;
Anon, the outer air would sigh,
Like pitying spirits passing by.

“ Naomi ! why tarriest thou ?

“ Dost thou, too, spurn the wretch, whose
vow

“ Has doomed thy loved one unto death ?

“ Thy daughter, with thy parting breath,

“ Confided to a father's care.

“ Oh, wretch ! to quench a mother's prayer.

“ Naomi ! ”

Like a young athlete

He sprung, at the sound of approaching feet ;

With falchion drawn, he stood at bay,

As a lion baffled of its prey.

Lo! in the dim uncertain light,
A lofty figure stood confest,
Drawing himself to his utmost height,
Folding his arms upon his breast.

“Aye, smite me down! no need of strife,
“With one heart-wearied of life;
“One who would bless with latest breath
“The weapon bringing welcome death.”

The irate ruler dropped his blade,
With glaring eyes the form surveyed.
“Who art thou daring to intrude
“Thus early on my solitude?
“Whence comest thou?—Speak!—I aver
“Thy life hangs on a gossamer!”

A bitter laugh rung on the air—
The towering figure stood unmoved.
“Who will not dare, when fell despair
“Follows the trail of the unloved?”

“ Aye, start not ! in this wretched guise
“ He who was Reuel recognise !
“ Thine anger—worse to me than steel—
“ I dare, to plead Despair’s appeal.

Sorrowfully the ruler sighed,
Flinging his glittering sword aside.
“ Reuel, my son ! why this distress ? ”
His voice had wondrous tenderness.
“ My son ! ”—the words o’er memory stealing,
Awoke a throe of phrensied feeling :
The youth fell prostrate at his feet,
His frame with weariness replete,
Fondly murmuring, “ My son, my son ;
“ She is mine—mine own—she is won ! ”

“ Not thine—nor mine—Elohim’s now ;—
“ Irrevocable is the vow.
“ Reuel—she is lost—for ever lost
“ To thee and me !—God’s holocaust ! ”

With phrensied strength the youth arose,
 Passing his hand across his brow,
All knit with agonising throes,
 Moaning, "No time for weakness now.
" Jephtha!—Jehovah I invoke!
" By Him I charge thee to revoke
" Thine horrid vow. She is not thine,
" Her heart has long, long, long been mine.
" Oh, for a seraph's tongue to plead,
" With heavenly rhetoric intercede!
" His burning words would but half express
" This heart's o'erladen bitterness.
" Hast thou not seen me madly ride
" Through fields of carnage at thy side?
" Wielding with weary arm the lance,
" Led on by thy approving glance?
" The foremost spear of all thy band,
" Yet asking no treasure at thy hand?
" In willing service often bled,
" Following wherever thou hast led?
" The maiden is mine—by my heart's blood
 won;
" For silver and gold I ask thee none."

“ Reuel ! not all the silver and gold
“ Arabian’s bring, and smiths refine,
“ All Egypt’s treasure cities hold,
“ Can redeem the child who once was mine.
“ If blood, drained drop by drop with pain,
“ Could ransom that precious life again,
“ This father’s heart the price would pay :
“ Alas ! it bleedeth every day.

As the frost wind blows on thermal spring,
Arresting its fervid murmuring,
The parent’s patient anguish froze
The phrenzied flow of Reuel’s woes.

“ Why art thou thus so dead to love ?
“ The votaries of Baal’s grove
“ In these anathemas delight.
“ Will God take pleasure in the rite ?
“ Doth the wild fowl, or beast of prey.
“ However fierce, its offspring slay ?
“ Will the wild monarch of the air,
“ With fell and murderous talons tear

" The callow twins of its bloody nest ?

" Nay, safely and secure they rest.

" Will the lioness, whose dugs are dry,

 " Her thirsty cubs in anger slay ;

" List, unconcerned, her young lions' cry,

 " Nor prowl more irate for her prey ?

" When Jordan swells around her lair,

" Will she the angry waters dare,

 " To bear her helpless young away ?

" Timid gazelles, and shrinking deer,

" Forget their helplessness and fear,

" If the cry of their stricken fawn they hear.

" Hast thou not heard the lapwing's cries,

" As with feigned fluttering, she flies

" To lure the fowler from her nest,

" Away from her downy offspring's rest ?

" Why, then, wouldst thou destroy thy child,

" By some mad phantasy beguiled ?

" All motherless,

" In lorn distress.

“ Oh, would the dead could intercede !
“ That her dead mother would rise and plead
“ From her grass-grown grave,
“ Her child to save.”

The last appeal, on the ruler fell
As sudden tempest—terrible.
A mighty sob, and a desolate wail,
So awful, it made the lone hearer quail.
'Tis a terrible sight, the mighty roll,
Which sorrow takes o'er a lofty soul,

“ No, Reuel, no ! I am not beguiled,—
“ I have had the token,—
“ The mother hath spoken,—
“ Fondly she liveth yet in her child.
“ ‘ My father, do as thou wilt,’—she said,—
“ A portent and sign—
“ Of the Will Divine,—
“ The voice of her mother—the voice of the
dead.

“ The enemy triumphed—I uttered the vow—
“ He is conquered and scattered for ever now ;
“ And God is silent—He answers not ;
“ He waits, in the spoil, his appointed lot.”

“ Nay, Jephtha! Heaven and Earth will
curse

“ In angel song and minstrel’s verse ;
“ And spirits lost will execrate
“ God’s mercy, in the maiden’s fate.
“ Her ebbing breath, and dying moan,
“ Will echo round El Shaddai’s throne.
“ When thou diest, Heaven’s angry fire
“ Will mark thy death with howlings dire.
“ The earth will shun to take thy dust,
“ Her heart will shudder when she must ;
“ And famished worms will gather round
“ A heart, wherein no love was found ;
“ A giant cairn shall mark thy tomb,
“ Where scorpions find a congenial home ;
“ All men in haste shall pass it by,
“ Casting the stone with averted eye.

" The seer will write with blood the page,
" The crimson record of thy age.
" When youthful Levite scans the scroll,
" Horror shall thrill his tender soul ;
" Thy people, when they hear it read,
" Shall bow down low the humbled head ;
" While smothered curses shroud the name
" That blots a nation's shield with shame.
" The angel keeper of thy doom
" Shall hide the archive deep in gloom ;
" And when"—

A flood of tenderness

Here hushed his eloquent distress :
Youth's fragrant memories came again :—
The woe—the bitterness—restrain :—
A grateful waft of heavenly air
Across the caverns of despair.
Raising his haggard eyes on high,
He moaned a strange, sad, suffering cry :
" I cannot curse thee—no, on me,
" Ye heavens, pour your malignity !"
Turning to fly the chieftain's tent,
The brave youth fell—his vigour spent.

The risen morn was bright and calm :
The happy birds each other wake,
Their plumage from the dews they shake,
And chirp the prelude of a psalm.
And all from rest, with joy, arose
To greet the golden morn's repose :
The sweet sounds of the outer air
Fell on the passion and despair
Vainly, as music charmers spell
On adder deaf and irascible ;
Or like the sweet and vernal rain
On the ungrateful desert's plain.

The ruler raised the unconscious lad,
Pillowed the head upon his breast,
His lips on the brow a moment pressed.
The anxious face was worn and sad.
With consciousness delirium came ;
Where Reason's rays infrequent gleam,
Refracted in the phrensied dream,
The light all clustering round a name.

Jephtha strove vainly to assuage,
The fervid fever's frantic rage ;
In raving laughter running o'er,
The ecstasy but grew the more.

" Aha ! ha, ha ! the wolf will prowl,
" When the moon shines out, to scare the owl.
" Hush ! the bleating of the sheep !
" And yet the silly shepherds sleep.
" Oh ! fie, fie, fie ! to charm and dart
" Your sting into the song-bird's heart—
" Warbling so full and sweetly, too.
" Oh, there's an eye is watching you !
" Well, well ; the adder and the dove
" Were not fashioned both for love ;
" 'Tis said the camels' milk will curd
" When they hear the singing of a bird.
" But, oh, 'tis pretty when they sing
" Amid the laughing buds of spring !
" His mate will sigh, poor thing, in vain,
" Ere her true love return again ;

“ His eloquent tongue, his heart so true,—
“ Oh, there's an eye is watching you !
“ The birds that sing the best are taken ;
“ The ripest fruits are always shaken.
“ Ah, well, old man, 'tis a heavy fate :
“ There is no justice at the gate.”

Scraps of wild song at times arose
Amid the delirium's maddening whirl,
As deep in the forest the song of the merle
At times may be heard when the tempest
blows.

“ Ah ! once I loved a fair gazelle,
“ Heigh-ho ! life is weary !
“ Alas ! how deeply none can tell,
“ Heigh-ho ! life is dreary !
“ There came a huntsman through the glade,
“ The evening gold began to fade :
“ Unleashed his hound, ungyved his kite ;
“ With onward bound, with towering flight,
“ They slew my fawn.
“ Vengeance shall on that hunter light
“ Before the dawn !

" Why weep, old man ?—she was not thine—

" She was the all, was ever mine !

" Before the moon is in the skies

" We'll hide her from the vulture's eyes ;

 " Her lovely dust in flowers will rise, '

" Whose fragrant voice will stay the breeze,

" And wake its fitful sympathies.

 " Heigh—ho !

 " The winds will blow.

 " Can you tell me where they go ?

 " Blowing !

 " No one knowing

 " Where the fitful breeze is going !

" No angry wind will there intrude

" Upon her grave's sweet solitude ;

" But weeping, list her mournful tale,

" And saddened—travel hill and dale,

" Like wandering minstrels, to prolong

" Her story in Eolian song.

" Weep not, old man, but dry your cheek,

" Her fair and fragile dust will speak.

“ Aha! the wolves are on the prowl,
“ And round and round the flames they howl ;
“ Grinding their tusks, as the laughing fire
“ Flames, derisive of their ire.
“ Aha! the heavenly winds are sent,
“ To lash the lazy element.
“ 'Tis prettier music than your flutes,
“ Your cornets, dulcimers, and lutes,
“ The howling of yon hungry brutes.

“ Aye! weep, old man, there is coming woe,
“ The fuel is spent, and the fire burns low ;
“ The dying flame our doom secures,
“ A feast for yonder epicures.
“ They will laugh, ha! ha! to hear our groans,
“ As they crush and crunch our living bones;
“ Aha! we have robbed them of the prey,
“ We have hid our sweet one safe away.
“ Oh, she is dead! in slumbers deep
“ Death's subtle potion lulls her sleep ;
“ And worms, all slimy, leave their trail
“ Over her features wane and pale.

" Corruption, greedy of his prey,
" Eats her loveliness away.
" Oh, lovely traitoress ! fondly pressed
" To yonder sheltering angel's breast.
" Ah ! thou wilt soon forget the vow,
" Plighted on yon mountain brow !
" Forget thy troth to love me still,
" Were it El Shaddai's blessed will !
" The glittering fire-fly well may spurn
" Relation with her brother worm.
" Oh, could I, like the glow-worm love,
" Lure my wanderer from above ;
" And mock the light of yonder star,
" And wile thee from thy home afar.
" No ! no ! I would not woo thee here ;
" Stay in yon brilliant atmosphere ;
" Live in thine own bright home of light ;
" I would not lure thee back to night.
" Alas ! I sometimes dream and rave,
" And wish the quiet of the grave
" Would still my fevered heart and pulse,
" Which anguish and despair convulse.

“ Oh ! that the welcome angel, Death,
“ Would lay his hand upon my breath,
“ Would take me to his throbbless breast,
“ And lull my weary life to rest.”







DEATH!—the sad shadow of mortal
life!—

Thrown by the Light Eternal
beyond :

How like a shadow it glides in the strife,
In joy unwelcome—in misery fond ;
In the morning behind us—beneath us at
noon ;
As life's journey shortens, it lengthens out
soon ;

The shadow before him no wanderer can
shun,

Declaring the sojourner's pilgrimage done.
Happy the traveller who sees the near light
Of home!—bright home!—in the gathering
night.

Well may the youthful pilgrim quail
When light ere noon begins to fail;
The day obscured by huge eclipse,
When Hope rose brimming to the lips.

Ah! Life is like a raveled sleave,
As Time unwinds the tangled skein;
How like embroiderers we weave,
Our hopes and fears—our joy and pain!
A breath will the fragile fabric fray,
And fill the spinner with dismay.
Thus the chief's daughter wails apart,
In lonesome heaviness of heart;
O'er the blighted hopes of her life to brood,
In Nature's congenial solitude.

Her tents are spread in mountain glades,
Where forest monarchs throw their shades ;
 O'er the aromatic mead,
Where the wild fawn hold fellowship,
As round the tents they sportive skip,
 Or on the herbage feed.
In the tent door, at the heat of day,
She with her young companions lay,
 Listening the mountain merle ;
Last of the song birds left to sing,
Making the woodland echoes ring,
 Soothing the suffering girl.

“ Oh, list the birds in yonder groves,
 “ How happily they sing !
“ They carol to their listening loves,
 “ With passionate warbling.
“ Ah ! once as blithe as they I sung,
 “ And Reuel heard the lay ;
“ The love was only on my tongue—
 “ Deep in my heart to-day.

" My heavy heart will break, I trow,
" Ere thus I sing again ;
" Yet, prithee ! bring my psaltery now,
" I'll try once more the strain :

" Oh, husbandman ! why dost thou sing
" On the summer threshing-floor ?
" Because the loaded camels bring,
" From fruitful fields their store ?
" While the patient oxen tread the grain,
" And the children laugh,
" 'Mid the flying chaff,
" As they ride on the threshing wane ?
" " My master's daughter will be mine,
" " When the grapes hang ripe upon the vine.'

" Oh, husbandman ! why dost thou sing,
" In glad and grateful toil ?
" Culling the grapes that in clusters cling,
" Sweet fruit of blessèd soil ?
" Treading the press with a jocund rhyme,
" With louder shout,
" As the wind flows out,
" Merrily, merrily, flies the time !

“ ‘ My master’s daughter will be mine,
“ ‘ Ere the seed is sown before the kyne.’

“ Oh, husbandman ! thou dost not sing,
“ As the oxen ear the ground,
“ And the sea-birds light on hovering wing,
“ In each deep furrow round ?
“ Why dost thou gossip with thy neighbour,
“ As ye plough the plain
“ And sow the grain,
“ And lightsomely pursue thy labour ?
“ ‘ My master’s daughter she *is* mine,
“ ‘ With the fields, the vineyards, and the wine.’

“ Oh ! never more the psaltery bring,
“ My heart is all too sad to play ;
“ My thoughts in wild imagining,
“ Rebelliously pursue their way.
“ And thou ! poor psaltery ! faithful friend !
“ Here our fond fellowship must end.
“ In happier days thy chords have brought
“ Sweet solace to the laden thought.

" But now "—

The frail strings snapp'd in twain,
And twanged in breaking, as in pain.
Tears filled the mournful maiden's eyes,
And smothered sobs in her bosom rise ;
The fingers that in fondness cling,
Had rent in love the faithful string.

" Alas ! some fate decreed above,
" Makes me unkind to all I love ;
" Like birds, whose days of song are o'er,
" To other lands, I too, must soar.
" Ah ! whither shall I fold my plume,
" In regions of eternal gloom ?

" The birds of song—a minstrel train—
" Follow the sunny summer's reign ;
" The nightingale gone with them too,
" Prince of her tuneful retinue.

" He leads the song in austral bowers,
" Hailing the sovereign of the flowers ;
" Never more shall I hear thee sing,
" Thou proud and gifted minstrel king !
" With the withered flowers shall I be lain,
" Ere thou return to our land again.

" Fond Reuel wooed me to fly with him,
" From the threatening blast,
" Till the winter is past,
" Where Tyrian skiffs like sea-birds skim.
" Fain would I go, but whither to fly
" Away from Him who wills me to die ?

" Last evening, when the sun was set,
" I saw a company in flight ;
" So high the sun shone on them yet,
" When all below was lorn of light.
" Oh ! may my flight be even so—
" Above the evening's after glow.
" Oh, .Thou ! at whose appointed times,
" Winds waft the birds to genial climes ;

" Waft, Thou, my spirit, with Thy breath,
" Beyond the chill domain of death.

" Autumnal groves are sere and lone,
" Now that the turtle doves are flown.
" Oft I have wiled the summer day,
" Listening the love-bird on the spray,
" Sharing the secret of her nest,
" Watching her downy fledglings rest.
" My spirit, too, will have taken wing,
" Ere she return again in spring.

" *He* called me his 'love-bird from over the
 sea,'
" In his passionate pleading,
" So oft interceding ;
" "She flies with a kindred mate,' said he.
" "Leaving the carrion bird alone,
" "Despondingly to seek his own.'
" Oh, had I but spoken,
" Or given him a token !

“ Now he will think me so cold and so cruel,

“ Dying heart-broken—

“ Heart-broken for love of thee, oh, my own
Reuel !

“ Love rises indignant

“ At a fate so malignant,

“ Wearing my spirit day after day.

“ It burns for expression,

“ It longs for confession ;

“ Constantly chafing, I am wasting away.

“ But, no ! the passion and desire

“ Shall perish—purged in holy fire.

“ The withered love I'll carry thence,

“ 'Twill be as the costly frankincense ;

“ My poor heart's only merchandise

“ The salt upon the sacrifice.

“ I have seen the fond young mothers bring

“ The turtle-doves for their offering,

“ And heard the love-birds cooing there,

“ E'en in the hallowed courts of prayer ;

" Yea, from the priest's hands often heard
" The love-note of the dying bird.
" Oh Lord, Elohim, if the dove
" Doth not offend Thee with her love,
" Let my poor burdened spirit be
" An offering made more worthy Thee.

" Is not the victim often borne
" Unwillingly along ?
" Drawn with cords to the altar's horn
" Amid the priestly throng ?
" Wrestling with sad and plaintive moans,
" Its flowing blood the while atones.
" Let my spilt life, with virtue, prove,
" Albeit full of human love.

" In the forest deep is a sapling oak,
" Blasted of eld with the lightning stroke ;
" The shrivelled spring-buds on its bough
" Look to the vengeful heavens now.
" Its erst-while comrade of the grove
" Is gnarled, and sere, and interwove ;

"The heart within decayed and dead,
"A few green twigs as yet unshed.
"Better die young, by Heaven's own dart,
"Than live with a dead and withered heart.
"Ah, let me rather die than live!
"Companions of my grief—forgive!
"Soon my sad, unhappy doom
"Will hush my murmuring in the tomb;
"No more repining, but sleep serene,
"For dwellers in that drear demesne."

So fled the time—each waning day
Hastening the maiden's hours away.
O'er every murmur and complaint
The brave young sufferer held restraint:
Her fond companions vainly vie
To soothe her wasting agony.
She wore no sackcloth to express
Her youthful spirit's wretchedness,
Wearing the garments every day
In which she led the dance so gay.

Her last young moon, all lustrous, shone
In the glory where the sun had gone,
Where the Even stood with languid charms,
The gleaned sheaf of light in her arms ;
Gathering every golden ray
Strawn by the careless reaper, Day.

An evening air, in passing, shed
Some withered leaves, all sere and dead,
 From the chaplet, on her brow,
Once fragrant, beautiful, and bright ;
When all her joys received their blight,
 Like the faded garland now.

“ Poor wreath ! ” she said, “ so fell decay,
“ Thus withers all I love away.
“ *His* favourite flowers are woven here—
“ I knew not then he was so dear—
“ He taught me every floweret’s name,
“ Its fragrant haunt, and whence it came.
“ As bud into the blossom blows,
“ Unconsciously Love’s passion rose ;

“ Opening its petals every hour,
“ Beneath his fond affection’s power,
“ My spirit with its odour fraught,
“ Sweetening my life in will and thought.

“ Poor wayward child ! my highest joy
“ Was with the brave and fearless boy,
“ Who clomb for me the mountain’s crown,
“ To bring the callow eaglet down ;
“ We reared the fledgling bird of prey.
“ Untamed, at length he flew away.
“ We roamed the forest solitude,
“ His fearless spirit mine imbued.
“ Wild beasts, familiars soon became ;
“ Losing the terror of their name.
“ The subtle serpent owned his charm,
“ And coiled unvenomed round his arm.

“ Oh, never more,
“ With loving lore,
“ Shall I the forest roam again !
“ And hear the storm-wind sweep the strain


- " On the cithern trees ;
" Grand symphonies,
" The phrensied tempest's wild refrain.
" And when the spirit of my sire,
" Kindled in his a kindred fire,
" Life's purpose dawned—the man arose—
" One of the band who crushed our foes.
" Oh, blinded heart ! by passion wiled,
" How strangely, helplessly, beguiled !
" When he was absent in the fray,
" My thoughts were with him night and day ;
" More fervent prayer and fond desire
" Were spent for him than for my sire.
" From prayer to praise, what glad rebound !
" Catching his voice's familiar sound,
" As the band returning clomb the steep
" That led to my father's mountain keep.
" How memory storeth and endears
" This withered wreath of hopes and fears !
* * * *
- " I heard strange music yesterday,
" High in the heavens—so far away.

" It was not the lark on soaring wing
" Thrilling the air with its warbling.
" Poor bird ! he hath forgot his lays ;
" He soars not in autumnal days.
" The psalmist is now an epicure !
" A prey to the artful fowler's lure !
" Oh ! better to die in early spring
" Than live, and ever forget to sing.
" Better to die when the heart is young,
" Than live when all its odes are sung ;
" All upward aspiration spent
" To batten, and live, alone intent.

" So dream-like was the harmony,
" I listened with suspended breath.
" Was it the angels sent to me
" A presage of approaching death ?
" The blaze of brilliant noon-day light
" Veiling the singers from my sight.
" It was not the wind in the distant trees ;
" Hushed were Eolian minstrelsies,
" It was the soul-absorbing swell,
" By angels only expressible.

" This morning, as I lay awake,
" Between the cock-crow and the break,
" A shadow came within the tent,
" I gazed all anxiously—intent.
" Gliding towards my couch it came,
" Through it I saw the brazier's flame :
" It bowed down and kissed my brow ;
" I feel its chilly influence now ;
" Then, gliding as it came, it went.
" It is some gloomy portent sent ;
" My shade, appearing from the tomb,
" To warn me of approaching doom.

" Oh ! how my heart with longing fails,
 " All desolate ;
" In visions of the night it quails,
" As sleep with darker dread, unveils
 " My dismal fate.
" Oh ! where is He my spirit seeks,
 " So far away ?
" Fast fly the hours and days and weeks,
" And yet His voice no comfort speaks :
 " In vain I pray.



-
- "It was no vision of the night,
 "The airy form of phantasy :
"It came, amid the noonday light,
 "A heavenly ecstasy to me.
"In tranquil musing here I lay,
"Watching the landscape shadows play ;
"The sun in setting splendour shone ;—
 "Reuel was by my side ;—
"The sorrow had never been or gone—
 "He called me his own—his bride.
"So like the love of earlier days,
 "With the passion of the past,
"Our joys were then unclouded rays,
 "And not, as now, o'ercast.
"And while enraptured thus with bliss,
 "There came a dreadful spell :
"Darkness lowered—a vast abyss—
 "And sudden horror fell.
"An altar rose on a lofty mound,
"And priests all gashed were dancing round,
 "With a monotone chant,
 "And a wearied pant,

"Clashing their cymbals as they sung,
"And the tinkling bells on their garments
 rung.

"The blood crept in me while I gazed
"As the fire so high on the altar blazed,
 "Like the terrible roar
 "That rose to Zoar,
"Which the fugitive heard from the burning
 plain,
"With harrowing cries and shrieks of pain.
"At length a dire procession came—
"The human victims for the flame :
 "A yell of despair
 "Rung on the air,
"As the ministrants of the altar, stood
"Before them, their garments wet with blood :

"Oh, dreadful sight ! I see them now,
"Tearing the garlands from the brow,

" While the chanting priests again advance,
" Panting in their writhing dance,
" Shaking the sistrum, striking the gong,
" Drowning the shrieks of the wretched throng.

" Thus beholding, I turned to Reuel;
 " Passion shot from his eyes
 " As he bid me 'arise'!
" With so changed a look, so harsh and cruel;
" Spell-bound and dumb with surprise and
 fear,
 " With desperate strength
 " I cried at length,
" 'Why art thou here, Reuel, why art thou
 here?
 " 'Oh, brother mine,
 " 'Yon apostate shrine,
" 'These priestly robes, are not for thee:
" 'Arise! arise! to Elohim flee.'"

“ ‘Nay, maiden, yon fire
“ ‘Is human desire ;
“ ‘I am priest and victim for love of thee ;
“ ‘Thou art my idol,—come perish with me.’
“ Ere I was aware
“ I was borne through the air,
“ Till his whisper inspired me, ‘Thou art mine ;
“ ‘Thee only I cherish ;
“ ‘With thee I will perish
“ ‘In the fire of love at Moloch’s shrine.’

“ With sudden despair,
“ My cry rent the air,
“ The full phrensy of faith did inspire ;
“ ‘Elohim deliver,
“ ‘Of mercy the Giver,
“ ‘Deliver my soul from this terrible fire.’
“ And the vision in confusion fled,
“ As a harrowing dream upon the bed.
“ A presence unseen I felt was near,
“ A voice perceived not by the ear ;

" So still—no watchful echo caught
" The sound with richest music fraught.
" 'What would'st thou, maiden? Lo! thy
cry
" 'Hath reached the ear of the Most High.'

" Trembling, I felt some power inspire,
" Expression of the strange desire.
" 'Oh, angel of the Lord, appear,
" 'And let mine eyes behold thee near!'
" The awful spell, I felt, was broken,
" Soon as the prayerful words were spoken;
" E'en while the heart's desire appealed
" The lovely presence stood revealed.

" Crowned with a tiara of light,
" Whose beams like lightning went and
came,
" Veiling His countenance from sight,
" A bright aureola of flame.

"I dared not look upon His face,
"But bowed so humbled by His grace;
"I felt His eyes with language glowing,
"His voice like living music flowing,
"And full felicity was mine,
"A heart enrapt with love Divine.

"He led me on—I cared not where,
"For blissful joy dispelled despair:
"And, lo! a city came in sight,
"With towering walls of jasper light;
"And gusts of music through the gate
"Made the listening soul inebriate.
"His powerful arm was round me thrown,
 "My head was nestled on His breast;
"He bowed, and claimed me for His own,
 "His lips upon my brow were pressed.

"At the golden gate I recognised
"My mother, so fondly memorised,
"And shining seraphim around,
"Sung greeting—oh, the blissful sound!

“And still His arm was round me thrown,
“And still He claimed me for His own.

“‘Maiden,’ he said, ‘lovest thou Me?

“‘This heart hath suffered much for thee.’

“I bowed my head, so humbled down,

“And lo! He adorned me with a crown.

“‘Thus I redeem thee at the gate,

“‘Who hath better right, now let him
state.’

“And all heaven seemed a moment still,

“The echo died on the eterne hill.

“‘No one,’ he said, ‘will ever dare!

“‘Lo! to the banquet let us repair!’

“And with the words my soul awoke,

“As the moaning wind played through the
oak,

“And all was dark, save the stars o’erhead;

“So, like a dream, the vision fled.

“It was no dream of transient flight

“Where mingled thoughts in sleep unite;

" It was the call of the Most High ;
" Now I have seen Him, I must die.
" I feel its holy influence fill
" My soul with adoration still.
" Angel of love, be ever nigh ;
" Appear unto my dying eye.
" Oh ! truly love was ne'er like Thine,
" So self-absorbing and Divine !
" Oh ! what to me is the fiery bier,
" Thy loving presence will be near.
" In fervent flames I'll gladly die,
" If in Thy cradling arms I lie !"





HERE ruin falls on Mizpeh's walls,
Behold the scaffolding!
Craftsmen of skill work with a will,
As merrily they sing!
The stones are hewn to the blithesome tune,
And the hammer and chisel ring!
Around the gate men congregate,
Where scribes, with skilful hand,
The tephillin grave which Jehovah gave,
His long-despised command.

The characters write in colours bright,
Ye heirs of the promised land !
People repair to the weekly fair,
Held at the city gate,
Where Commerce again resumes her reign,
All joyous and elate.
Amid the barter do they think of the
martyr,
And her unhappy fate ?

Oh, blessed Peace ! what glad release
From vassalage and woe ;
Freedom begins, when a nation's sins
Receive their overthrow ;
When Truth sheds light on Thought set right,
Enfranchising the Mind ;
Set the Conscience free, and Liberty
Will dwell among mankind.
Men aye advance, when God's governance
Affects their polity ;
The arts of Peace at once increase,
Such men are truly free !

Again the smith, with lusty lith,
Resumes his peaceful trade ;
Shares for the plough he forges now,
Ox-goad, and pruner's blade.
At his smithery door, as in days of yore,
The idlers group around ;
His thorn-fire glows, as his hammer-blows
Ring out the anvil's sound.
Men plough again the wasted plain,
Where whitens the skeleton ;
And scare away the beasts of prey—
Their avocation gone.
Men cry not for spoil, but sing as they
toil,
From morn to eventide ;
The voice of the cattle, and children's prattle,
Echo on every side ;
The blood-hound's bay, the war-horse's
neigh,
Are terrors of the past ;
Havoc and riot give place to quiet,
And blessèd peace at last.

The welcome tones of the grinding-stones

Are heard at the cottar's door ;

Around the wells the village belles

Regather, as of yore.

Ye maidens, in your joy and gladness,

Steals there a thought of passing sadness

For her who wails apart ?

Oh ! breathe ye all a daily prayer

For the lone maiden called to bear

The ban of the broken heart.

Why do the people congregate,

And all oppressed and anxious wait,

Without the walls to-day ?

The two full moons have fled apace,

Since Jephtha's daughter sought for grace ;

Her days are sped away.

They come—the maiden and her train,

Her father at her bridal rein,

Walks clad in sackcloth, on his head

Dust and ashes, lo ! are spread.

He walks with bare and bleeding feet,
Leaving the blood-prints on the street!
How sickly pale, and lined with woe,
That cheek, that blanched not to the foe!

All his woe-worn face beholding,
The sackcloth his bent figure folding,
Were filled with awe—their hearts all burning,
With a strange compassion yearning.

Here and there, old followers crushing
Through the crowd, still onward rushing,
Fall down before the dear loved chief,
 Kissing his hands and bleeding feet,
Striving to share his heavy grief,
 Would fain have borne him through the
 street,

But for the firm command that fell
From lips to them immutable.
The people spell-bound until now,
Tumultuously their grief avow,
 Their sympathy expressing.

Some cry to Heaven in prayerful pleading,
Some with the chieftain interceding,

Some the meek young maiden blessing,
Who trancedly the scene surveyed ;
In garments pure and white arrayed,

Crowned with flowers as for the altar ;
She looked around on the sobbing crowd,
Her face unruffled by a cloud,

The placid features never falter.

Sorrow had left its refining grace
O'er each lineament of her face ;
The spirit looking from her eyes
Seemed some bright seraph in disguise,
That expectation fondly clung,
Waiting heaven's accent on her tongue.

Thus, with love and grief contending
Rose the people's frantic feeling ;
The father and his daughter wending,
Through multitudes around them kneeling ;

Foolish mothers fondly bringing
Infants to their bosoms clinging,
As the martyr's touch and kiss
Were passports to the realms of bliss.
Fondly to their bosoms pressing
Babes who had the maiden's blessing,
All fearful of so much caressing.

* * * *

Midnight shrouds the sleeping city,
Closed in sleep the eyes of Pity,
As, from his palace-gate proceeding,
Appears the mournful ruler, leading
The ass, whereon, tradition saith,
His daughter rode to meet her death.
Through the streets so still and dismal,
Through the darkness, so abyssmal,
Where the wakeful curs are prowling,
O'er some filthy offal growling,
Where the drowsy watchmen, waking,
The night dew from their garments shaking,

At once, in wonder and dismay,
The chieftain's silent sign obey.
Slowly the gate creaks on its hinges,
Against the sullen wall impinges;
Down the rugged roadway wending
Into the valley's gloom descending;
So that father, broken-hearted,
With his lovely child departed.
The crescent moon obscured her light,
The cock crew from the distant height;
A bittern rose with frightened scream,
Down by Jabbok's distant stream.

* * * *

The weird young moon was on the wane
When Jephtha came to his home again,
Returning at midnight and alone;
Whence he came remains unknown.
He staggered silent through the gate,
Haggard, weary, and desolate.
None ever inquired the maiden's doom:
Some say she is not in the tomb,

But serves in Shiloh's courts Divine,
Delivered by Jehovah's sign.

Spurred by the ruler's wise decree,
Jeshurun rose from his lethargy ;
Rose from beneath proud Ammon's feet
To a land with corn and wine replete ;
The chief was never seen to smile :
No joy nor pleasure could beguile
His features from their marble calm.
Even his own Gilead's balm
Could not assuage or heal his pain :

His life was like a mournful psalm,
Set to a sad and minor strain.
His eyes ne'er lost their sad expression,
His lips their stolid iron compression ;
Seldom joining the debate,
In elders' council at the gate,
Contention there, his word decides,
Judgment with equal hand divides ;
Listening misfortune's sad confession,
Crushing with iron heel oppression.

When Ephraim from his power rebelled,
Like as a tree by woodman felled,
He crushed the foe with ruthless slaughter
By the crimson waves of Jordan's water.

Day by day, the lines of care,
Ploughed o'er his brow with a deeper share,
The brave heart never lost its tone,
The broken harp was still euphone.
Saddened like music in the gloom
Of some departed psalmist's tomb,
The darkened winds imprisoned there
Make music to the mournful air ;—
As the ghostly chords on the hearer fall
From the psalmist's harp hung on the wall,
The ruler, ripe and full of days,
Laid down his state
Where Life opens two different ways,
Where many wait,
He passed gladly through the gate.

* * * *

The maidens of Israel lovingly cherished
The memory of her who so mournfully
perished ;
When the green leaf grows golden, before
it is sere,
They meet on the mountains four days in
the year.

When the gathering storks round the gate-
way sail,
Ere the voice of the plover is heard on the
gale,
When the herbs on the hill-sides far scatter
their scents,
Then the damsels of Israel spread out their
tents ;

When the olives are shaken and the vintage
is o'er,
When the orchard and vineyard have yielded
their store,

When new wine and oil from the presses
are shed,
Then the maidens of Israel bewail for the
dead.

At midnight so mournful, the sad requiem
sing,
Their lamps in their hands, trimmed and
burning, they swing,
So singing they wander o'er hillside and
plain,
Where the shade of the martyr returneth
again.

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